**DE BEERS TRICK ON EXPENSIVE COST OF DIAMOND**

When you shell out more money on a diamond than you did on your car, there are all kinds of lies you tell yourself to make this transaction feel better:

* A diamond engagement ring is an once in a lifetime gift (hopefully).
* A diamond is a family heirloom my great-great-grandchildren will judge me by.
* A diamond is rare and that’s why they cost as much as a kidney transplant.

Two of the above statements are true. Unfortunately for your wallet, it’s not the last one.

If diamonds aren’t rare, why are they priced like all the mines have closed up shop? Especially when there are gorgeous, and truly rare gemstones from now depleted mines, like the [**Paraiba Tourmaline**](https://www.londonde.com/blogs/paraiba-tourmaline-the-rare-and-enigmatic-brazilian-gemstone/)?

Hold onto your Tiffany boxes (and maybe some cash) because here’s why diamonds aren’t rare and still expensive.

**Diamonds are Forever?**

At the turn of the last century diamonds were actually scarce when suddenly loads of them were discovered in South Africa. To make a [**very long (and sordid) story**](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/02/have-you-ever-tried-to-sell-a-diamond/304575/) short, we owe a big round of applause to De Beers and their advertising agency’s very talented (and female) copywriter for making diamonds THE only jewel to express your eternal love and devotion with.

Fun history fact:  De Beers' advertising agency, N.W. Ayer, wasn’t a fan of copywriter [**Frances Gerety’s**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Frances_Gerety) 1947  tagline “A Diamond is Forever”,  but tolerated it long enough for the line to prove itself in a way that no other tagline in history has done. At the time, diamonds were down in popularity thanks to that real bummer: The Great Depression.

In other words, De Beers not only manufactured the tradition of giving a diamond engagement ring as the thing to do, via successful advertising campaigns, but also the illusion of scarcity - all while they held the keys to the diamond mines.

**Where Does The Hefty Price Tag Come From?**

Two words. False scarcity.

Think you’d never fall for the oldest trick in the book? Think again.

False scarcity goes much deeper than an over-caffeinated salesperson or diamond dealer telling you the ring you’ve just fallen in love with (the one that sparkles in all the right places) is the only one like it. In the store. In the state. On planet Earth.

And they aren’t exactly lying.

What they aren’t telling you is that they’ve made it that way.

[**By limiting the supply of new diamonds**](https://www.businessinsider.in/heres-why-diamonds-are-so-expensive-2015-9?r=US&IR=T) that make it from mine to market a year, De Beers can ensure that there’s not enough bling to go around for everyone who is planning on saying “I do.”

From there it’s just basic supply and demand economics, meaning when supply is down, diamond prices go up. And because we all love that sparkle, we’re willing to look the other way and take out one more credit card just to get the carat size we want.

**Not Everyone Wants a Diamond Forever**

Say what you will about Millennials, but when it comes down to it they don’t buy into tradition for the sake of tradition -- and diamond engagement rings are no different.

Many Millennials just [**aren’t interested in getting hitched**](https://www.cnbc.com/2017/05/20/millennial-couples-arent-buying-diamonds.html) and if you’re not tying the knot anytime soon, there’s really no need for an engagement ring. Besides, with all that student debt they’ve racked up, living together sans ring until their loans are paid off in year 2056 seems like a more practical idea.

When you consider financial, ethical, and personal choices not to wed, Millennials are helping to swing the diamond-buying tradition into a new direction.

Whether you’re a staunch traditionalist who loves her diamonds (like me) or excited about other non-diamond (and truly rare) engagement ring choices, the value of a diamond should be determined by you and your partner -- not the diamond guys.

And since [**we’re not the diamond guys**](https://www.rarecarat.com/), we can sleuth out the best deal on diamonds anywhere (online or off) if you do decide that a diamond is forever, after all.

When it comes to heirloom rings (and jewelry in general tbh), let’s just say that the Royal Family does it right.

I mean can you get any better than diamonds from Diana’s personal collection? Meghan Markle, do you know how lucky you are?

But all gushing over the Royal Family aside, it does raise an interesting question: is it okay for us commoners to propose with an heirloom ring and if so  -- what’s the best way?

While we may not \*officially\* be royalty, when it comes to your big day you should feel every bit the Princess (okay so maybe they’re technically Duchesses) whether you decide to go with a heirloom ring or not.

But is it OK to propose with an heirloom ring? It can be complicated especially if the heirloom is beautiful and meaningful, but you also want the bride-to-be to have a ring that she loves and truly represents her.

When it comes to proposing with an heirloom ring or an heirloom diamond there are really two ways to do it.

**Straight Up**

Could anyone ever forget [**Princess Diana’s**](http://www.instyle.com/celebrity/royal-rocks-engagement-rings-princess-brides#219073) engagement ring? When it comes to jewelry, this has to be one of (if not the) most memorable pieces in the world. It would have been a tragedy to rip that diamond and sapphire stunner to shreds just to recreate something new for Kate Middleton. To the Royal Family (and the world) that ring is iconic. In this case, the heirloom ring was much better left as is, regardless of who would be receiving it.

And we can hardly imagine Kate Middleton turning that stunner down. But what does this mean for you, if you're planning on proposing with a family heirloom?

If your heart's set on proposing with an heirloom ring that has a lot of significance to your family, chances are you won’t want to tear it apart and create something new. Of course, if it’s your mother or grandmother’s ring  (and she’s still alive) it’s always best to get her blessing on how she wants the ring gifted. She may or may not have an opinion, but usually if the person you inherited the ring from is still alive, you won’t want to redesign it without their blessing.

Remember, don’t force the heirloom ring on your SO. While it’s romantic and extremely special to have an antique from your family to pass on, you’re not trying to marry your great-grandmother. And your engagement isn’t about your family. It’s about you bride-to-be, who she is, and who you two are as a couple.

In simple terms, if you have an heirloom ring you want to propose with, especially if redesigning it is out of the question: just ask. Show her the ring. Ask for her honesty, and assure her that you aren't going to be mad if she doesn't want the family heirloom. Remember, this is about her. Don't get so caught up in the sentiments of your family ring, that you forget about the person who has to wear it!

Think about it. If your blushing bride hates antiques, has a strong sense of personal style, or is particular in her preferences - she may not go for wearing someone else’s ring. No matter how sweet the gesture. An heirloom diamond engagement ring is sometimes better in theory, less in practice. We can't stress enough that when it comes to an heirloom engagement ring, leave the surprise engagement at the door.  And if she prefers to pick out her own ring? Don’t make her feel bad. This is her engagement, and you want her to wear a ring that represents her - not your grandmother. The sentiment is sweet, but shouldn’t be the source of an argument.

**With a Twist**

While you and your- one- and- only may not be on the latest cover of Hello Mag, you still have the option using an heirloom ring to propose -- maybe just not all of it.

Say what now?

That’s right, just take the pieces you absolutely LOVE of that precious piece that meant so much to your Great Aunt Zelda and make it into something brand spankin’ new (while still keeping a dash of the OG).

Admittedly ( and perhaps morbidly) this is easier to do when the original owner of the ring is dead, but putting a modern-twist on an old classic combines the best of two worlds, while incorporating your beloved’s personality. It's also the perfect physical representation of two families coming together to create a new family. Sappy, but true.

Unlike Kate Middleton, [**Meghan Markle’s knockout engagement ring**](http://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-tips/celebrity-travel/meghan-markle-kate-middleton-engagement-rings-comparison) features 2 stones from Diana’s personal collection in an entirely new setting meant just for her.

How to pull it off? The most important part of using elements from an heirloom engagement ring, is to get absolute consent BEFORE giving those precious memories a facelift.

So with all these romantic benefits of passing on the family heirlooms, is there any reason NOT to dig into the family jewelry box?

Yes, there's always a few reasons, especially where family and money are involved.

**Did the love last?**

Not to put too fine a point on it, but it’s gotta be said -- especially if you’re going with the Kate Middleton route: did the relationship end happily? And if not, can that be separated from the piece of jewelry or not -- even if you end up redesigning the stones into a Meghan Markle head turner?

**Are you just being cheap?**

Ouch.

We get it -- getting a piece of expensive jewelry literally handed to you is probably one of the best things ever. BUT if you’re just proposing with your family heirloom engagement ring because you wanna pinch some pennies - you might want to think again.

We can’t think of a worse way to start your happily ever after, because quite frankly if money is the only reason you chose the heirloom ring, you may not even make it through “I do.” Engagement rings are highly personal, and while budgets should absolutely be considered, the engagement ring is a gift of love and should represent the promise of everlasting love, first and foremost. (We’re becoming total saps over here!)

Besides, who needs to worry about penny-pinching anymore? \*ahem\* [**we’ve got you covered**](https://www.rarecarat.com/) ;)

So what’s the DL on Heirlooms?

They're absolutely fabulous -- if they match the person you’re giving them to and you have the grace of the giver to do with them what works best for your relationship. Because while heirlooms may contain special memories, they aren’t a solid foundation to build your new relationship on, and in some cases it may be time to say, [**“Out with old and IN with the new. ”**](https://www.rarecarat.com/)