

Direct cremation

What is direct cremation?

Increasing numbers of people are turning to direct cremation as an alternative to a conventional funeral because it offers the opportunity to say farewell to someone who has died in a way they find more personal, more fitting and more satisfying. The fact that it is also much cheaper is a bonus.

Direct cremation means that the body of the person who has died goes straight off to be cremated without any sort of funeral ceremony. The ashes are returned to the family, who then hold a commemorative event in their own way and their own time.

Direct cremation is the way to go for anyone who doesn't want to hold a funeral. They may have been estranged from the person who died. Or perhaps the person who died just didn't want all the fuss of a funeral.

You also have the option of direct burial, of course. You'll still be able to hold a commemorative event – anything from a memorial service to a private family-and-friends affair.

Direct cremation is still seen as unconventional, especially as an alternative to a normal funeral. If you choose it, it may well raise an eyebrow here and there.

Have a think about the issues involved, then decide. Read on.

It's all about what you believe

You may wonder if a funeral is really necessary. You have possibly been to more than one bleak, meaningless funeral which missed the point at every turn. What good will a funeral do, really?

According to what you believe, you may have strong ideas about the status of a body after death.

If you think the spirit has departed from the person who's died – that the body is no longer the person – then you may feel that their body is just so much old clothes. Which is why, when John Lennon was killed, Yoko Ono wanted no focus on his bullet-ridden corpse. She had it cremated unceremoniously, unwitnessed. She held a memorial ceremony instead, to take place everywhere and anywhere. "Pray for his soul from wherever you are," she said. And people did. Presumably this is what John wanted, too.

There's no point in holding a funeral unless you know exactly why you're doing it.

You can dispose of a body in a ceremonial way by holding a funeral, or you can arrange to have it buried or cremated with no one there. The consequence for the body is the same in either case.

Don't need one, don't want one

When the playwright Arthur Miller was asked if he'd be going to the funeral of his ex-wife, Marilyn Monroe, he replied, "Why would I go? She won't be there."

If this echoes how you feel, then direct cremation may be for you. Direct cremation is for people who, in line with their beliefs and values, **do not wish to have a formal, conventional funeral at which the body of the person who has died is present**. So there is no hearse, no procession, no

service in the crematorium. Instead, the body is cremated without ceremony. The ashes can be scattered at the crematorium – you don't have to be there. But you have the option of doing what you want, how you want, where you want, if you want, with the ashes.

A way of preparing a body for a funeral

Direct cremation is also for those who regard cremation as a means of preparing a body for a funeral.

Once the body has been cremated, the ashes are durable, portable and divisible. You can carry them to any venue you choose, whenever you choose, and hold a commemorative event of your own devising — in a church, a village hall, a restaurant; on a mountain top; at the seaside. The ceremony may conclude with a scattering of ashes – as the sun sets or rises, perhaps. But not necessarily. They can be divided up amongst certain people and kept.

A way to go home

Direct cremation is an attractive option for people wanting to take the person who has died abroad to their home country; it saves the considerable costs of embalming and air freight.

It's affordable

Because of its simplicity, direct cremation is the cheapest way of disposing of a dead person. For this reason it appeals to those whose budget is limited and to those who wish to spend as little money as possible on a funeral. Direct cremation costs as little as £1000 all in.

Who does it?

Many funeral directors now offer direct cremation – and direct burial. Some funeral directors see it for the positive choice it very often is – an alternative to a conventional funeral.

But not all of them get it: they think it's inappropriate, it's just for poor people and skinflints. You can tell by the tone they use when you phone. Many funeral directors offer direct cremation under separate branding to keep it well away from their 'conventional' business. Don't deal with anyone who views it as an under-the-counter and shameful thing to do.

There is one internet undertaker offering direct cremation who, in our opinion, really gets it. It's what he does fulltime, it's not just a sideline. We have no hesitation whatever in recommending:

Nick Gandon of [Simplicita Cremations](#). Nick is a lovely, honest guy who does a really good job nationwide.

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