

USA Weekend

Need2Know: Plan Your Funeral

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By Judy Mandell

It is the final frontier for boomers: personalized funerals. So says Lisa Takeuchi Cullen, author of “Remember Me: A Lively Tour of the New American Way of Death.” “This, after all, is the generation that redefined music and fashion and politics. Death is simply next on their to-do list,” Cullen says.

Tips to use now:

Be specific. “Spell it out,” says Mark Duffey, head of Everest, a funeral advisory service based in Houston. “If you don’t write it down and tell someone you trust where the plan is, your plan will depart this Earth when you do, never to have seen the light of day.”

Consider cremation. It offers more options for personalization. “Cremated remains can ride in a balloon, go up in fireworks, be shot into space, blown into glass sculptures, packed into a golf club, a duck decoy or a fishing pole and even made into a beautiful gem-certified diamond,” suggests Michelle Cromer, the author of “Exit Strategy: Thinking Outside the Box.”

Plan a postmortem party. Worried about propriety? Don’t. “As long as it’s legal and ethical, there are no boundaries,” Duffey says. Ask survivors to do something you enjoy. If you love snorkeling, plan a remembrance cruise in the Caribbean, suggests Lynn Isenberg, author of “The Funeral Planner” (soon to be a TV series on Lifetime).

Make a memory video. “This is one of the most powerful mediums to use at a funeral,” says Neil O’Connor, CEO of three California mortuaries. “You can send personal messages to children, spouses and friends or life lessons you would like to pass on.”

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1-800-913-8318