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## **Introduction: “Diamonds – A Girl’s Best Friend” A Guide to Buying the Right Diamond and How to Care for it.**

“Diamonds - A girl’s best friend” - You must have heard this phrase or similar phrases a lot of times. Some jewelry makers/ sellers use this phrase in their advertisements too. However, have you ever wondered what actually a diamond is?

Well, in technical terms, a diamond is just an arrangement of carbon atoms; a peculiar arrangement for that matter. It’s the same carbon atoms that form graphite too (which is used in your pencil leads). However, with diamonds the arrangement of carbon atoms is such that it imparts a glowing look to them. Diamond is generally found in mines as a shining rock (just like metals and other materials). However, it is not as shining as you see it in jewelry. In fact, if you were to look at diamond in their nascent form, you would be quite disappointed. This rock/diamond reveals its full glory only after it is cut and polished. It is only after this cutting and polishing that a diamond actually becomes fit for use in jewelry. Cutting the diamonds require a great deal of skill. In fact, the glow and the value of a diamond is dependent on how well it has been cut by the diamond cutting professional.

Another interesting fact about diamonds is that they are one of the hardest substances on earth. In fact, diamonds that are not glorious enough for use in jewelry are used in industries for cutting other metals/ materials. Besides being the hardest substance, diamonds are also one of the toughest substances on earth. In fact, diamonds are so tough that they are unaffected by scalding temperatures as high as 700 deg Celsius. Even acids are not able to cause any harm to diamonds. This might be the reason behind the saying “Diamonds are forever”.

Thus diamonds represent solidarity and shine, and are indeed ‘A girl’s best friend’

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## **- Where Diamonds are Mined**

Argye mine located in the Kimberley region in the far north east of Western Australia. Owned by Rio Tinto, this mine is the world's largest single producer of volume of diamonds. However, due to low proportion of gem quality diamonds it is not the value leader. It does produce 90-95% of the world's supply of pink diamonds.

Diavik is also owned by Rio Tinto, located in Canada it is a very large mine. It is located north of Yellowknife and south of the Arctic Circle on an island. The island is connected by an ice road. It is also an important part of the regions economy employing more than 700 people and producing more than 8 million carats annually.

Ekati diamond mine is owned by BHP Billiton and located south of the arctic circle in the Northwest Territories of Canada. The Ekati is Canada's first operational diamond mine. Diamonds mined here are sold under the Aurias trade name Authenticity is verified through Canada Mark service. CanadaMark service is also owned by BHP Billiton Diamonds, Inc.

Baken diamond mine is located along the lower Orange River in South Africa. It is owned and operated by Trans Hex. The average size stone for 2004 was 1.29 carats. In 2004, this mine produced a 78.9 carat D color flawless diamond that sold for more than 1.8 million dollars (US), as well as a 27.67 pink diamond that was sold for over 1 million US dollars.

Merlin is the second of only two diamond mines in Australia. No longer operating it was owned by Rio Tinto and sold to Striker Resources, who has explored the possibilities of reopening the mine.

Orapa is the world's largest diamond mine. It is located 240 Km west of Francistown. The mine is owned by "Debswana" which is a partnership between DeBeers and the government of Botswana. This mine operates 7 days a week. It maintains pre primary and primary schools for its employee's children. There is also a 100 bed hospital and game park. This mine began production in 1971 and is the oldest mine owned by the Debswana Company.

The Premier mine located in Cullinan, South Africa produced the largest gem diamond ever in 1905. The Cullinan Diamond weighed 3,106.75 carats. This mine also produced the Golden Jubilee diamond which weighed 545.67 carats. This mine is owned by the De Beers Company and was renamed The Cullinan Diamond Mine in 2003 in celebration of its centennial.

## **- How Diamonds Are Mined**

We seldom think about how the diamonds we wear came to us. Natural diamonds, as opposed to synthetic diamonds or fake diamonds, are mined from the earth. There are currently two methods of mining diamonds: Pipe Mining and Alluvial Mining.

When pipe mining is used, the diamonds are extracted from the earth through volcanic pipes. These are not man-made pipes. These are natural pipes in the ground. Shanks are put into the ground next to the pipes, and tunnels are driven into the deepest parts of the pipe. The diamonds are not sorted out at the mine. Instead, huge rocks that are full of diamonds are brought out of the mine and moved to a screening plant for separation.

The Alluvial mining method is done in riverbeds and on beaches. Walls are built to hold back the water and the sand on the bank or beach is moved with a bulldozer until the level of earth that diamonds can be found in is reached. Again, the diamonds are not sorted here. Instead, the sand that contains the diamonds is bulldozed into trucks, and taken to screening plants.

## **- Learn About The 4C's of Diamonds**

Diamonds come in all shapes, color and weight. The quality of these magnificent stones is determined by understanding the 4C's of diamonds. These 4C's are - Color, Carat, Clarity and Cut. Let have a quick look at what these mean.

**Color:** Diamonds come in all colors. Colorless diamonds are quite a rarity and are considered the purest and the most expensive diamonds. 'Gradation' is the correct word to use for talking about the shades/colors of diamonds. So, the gradation of diamonds starts with colorless diamonds (the most expensive ones) and moves on to yellowish color. As diamonds increase in their degree of yellowish-ness their quality diminishes. But now diamonds can be seen in many other colors like pink, blue etc. (and these seem to be even more expensive). Quality of a diamond can be best judged by keeping them next to each other and comparing (in order to check the presence of yellowish tinge)

**Carat:** Carat is the unit for measuring the weight/size of a diamond. One carat is divided into 100 smaller divisions called points. One carat is 1/142 times an ounce (in weight). Normally we come across diamond rings which contain diamonds that are less than a carat. The concept of "bigger the better" does not hold good for diamonds. Along with carat, we should also look for color and clarity.

**Clarity:** Clarity of a diamond can be determined by inclusions (i.e., the internal flaws in the diamond). Since diamonds are found in mines as rocks, they contain flaws which can also be considered as birthmarks give to diamonds by Mother Nature. Besides the internal flaws, a diamond you also have blemishes on its surface. GIA grading system is quite commonly used for determining the clarity of a diamond and is a correct guide for determining the clarity of a diamond.

**Cut:** Today diamonds are cut with high end equipments to give it a desired shape. You can determine a good cut by its light-reflecting and its light dispersion properties. There are numerous different shapes of cut diamonds but the most common one is the round

cut that is used predominantly for diamond rings. Others include princess cut which is square in shape, emerald cut resembling a box with truncated corners etc.



## **- Shapes of Diamonds-Part I (most prevalent shapes)**

Have you ever wondered how many shapes a diamond has? Well, diamonds are actually shapeless when they are found in the mines. It's only the cutting of diamonds that leads to diamonds taking various shapes. Since diamonds form an important part of jewelry fashion they are cut into a number of different shapes. So, we cannot put a number to the number of shapes. However, in general, diamonds are cut in 10-12 shapes more often (but designers keep coming out with new and imaginative shapes all the time) than others. What shape will suit a person is dependent on his/her personality.

Here are five shapes in which diamonds are most commonly cut:

- **Round brilliant diamonds:** This is the most common shape into which a diamond is cut and is most used in diamond engagement rings. Round diamonds have clear lines and symmetry and are the most expensive. A circle has no beginning or end - so round diamonds go perfectly with the theme of love and romance. Round diamonds can be seen in rings, necklace, earrings or bracelets.
- **Heart-shaped diamonds:** Heart-shaped diamonds are the most popular shape among lovers. It indicates their love and affection for each other. This shape looks best in pendants and ear rings (however, it's really a matter of personal choice).
- **Pear Shaped diamonds:** As the name suggests, these diamonds are in the shape of a pear or tears from your eyes. You can find pear shaped diamonds mostly in earrings.
- **Princess cut diamond:** Princess cut diamonds are amongst the smallest diamonds in the diamond pool. They are inverted pyramids and carry most of their weight at the bottom. Though they are small, they look electrifying.

- **Oval diamonds:** If you have small hands or short fingers and want to give an elongated look to your hands, oval diamonds are meant for you. Oval diamonds make smaller hands look elongated because of their symmetrical design. They really look elegant.

## - Shapes of Diamonds-Part II (other shapes)

Besides the Round, Oval, princess-cut, heart and pear shaped diamonds; diamonds are also cut in the following shapes:

- **Trillion cut diamonds:** As the name suggests, these diamonds have a triangular shape with equal sides. It looks great with pendants. Women can wear this shape with deep neck blouses (or whatever way it suits their personality)
- **Radiant Diamonds:** Radiant diamonds show resemblance to emerald cut diamonds with respect to shape. These diamonds are also square or rectangular in shape. But they glitter more than the emerald shaped diamonds because of the difference in the number of facets. Since radiant diamonds have more number of facets than the emerald diamonds, they look more stunning.
- **Marquise diamonds:** The marquise diamond is known for its grandness. This type of diamond is elongated with points at each end.
- **Baguette Cut Diamonds:** These diamonds are commonly used as side stones in making of the jewelry. They have a step cut shape and really look good. Though they are used as side stones, they look really impressive when put together with other diamond shapes in the same piece of jewelry.
- **Cushion Cut Diamonds:** They are also called as the pillow cut diamonds. They are square shaped and have a sophistication of a Romeo Juliet era.

Thus, you have quite a good number of different shapes of diamonds to choose from. Many times a lot of shapes are used in the same piece of jewelry in order to give it a grand and elegant look.

## **- Uncertainty Surrounding Buying of Diamonds on the Internet**

Did you ever think that diamonds could be purchased on the internet? Well, like everything, diamonds too have caught the internet fever. So, you can actually buy diamonds on the internet. But the question is – ‘Should you actually buy diamonds or diamond jewelry on the internet?’ Let’s see.

Pure diamonds are expensive and almost everyone would give it a good thought before going ahead with the purchase of a diamond or diamond jewelry. Generally, diamonds need to be seen and inspected in order to get satisfaction about their quality.

Buying diamonds on the internet involves a lot of uncertainty and casts doubts in your mind. There is anxiety about the online dealer. Since you have not seen the dealer or their physical shop, you would not have the confidence to buy from them. You are even unsure whether their business is legal. Another doubt that comes to mind is the safe delivery of your diamonds. You cannot be sure about the packaging of your jewelry. If the setting of diamonds loosened during delivery, what would be the return policy?

But you can overcome all these apprehensions by doing a little bit of study.

- Try to do research about the online diamond retailer. Go for an established online retailer. You can check about his past record on the forums/internet.
- Try to establish communication with him. Ask about his refund or exchange policy, if you were unsatisfied. What would happen if the item delivered was found to be damaged?
- Study about diamonds before purchasing them. You can get free tutorials on diamonds to study on the internet. Look out for cut, clarity, carat weight and color of the diamond. You can even compare prices before purchasing on the internet.

- Ask the diamond retailer to give you a certification of your diamond jewelry from a high reputed laboratory. Certification is nothing but a report given by the gemologists who have minutely examined the diamonds under a microscope.

So with just doing a little research on the internet you can choose the perfect stones right from your computer at affordable prices.

## **- Tips on Care of Diamonds**

Do you remember one of the most cherished moments of your life? One of my precious moments was when my husband gifted me diamond jewelry. Since this gift symbolized his love for me, it was even more important for me to take care of it.

There are various ways of ensuring that your diamonds shine and sparkle forever. Here are some tips:

- Always keep your diamond jewelry in a box that has various partitions. If the box doesn't have partitions, you can keep each item of jewelry packed in different soft muslin cloth. This will protect the jewelry items from rubbing against each other and causing damage to each other.
- Avoid wearing your diamond rings while doing household chores. Even though the diamonds themselves don't get affected by detergents, washing liquids or chemicals; their polish does get affected. So, exposure of diamonds to such chemicals/ substances could tarnish the polish of your diamonds (and remember that polish plays an important role in making the diamonds sparkle). Your diamond ring can easily lose its glitter if you wear it while kneading flour.
- If the stones are not fitted tightly, dirt might enter the ring thus giving it an ugly look. Moreover, diamonds might come out from the jewelry and you might lose them forever. So, it's important to ensure that your diamonds have a tight fitting. Take your jewelry to a jeweler even on the slightest hint of loosening of diamonds.
- If you love swimming take special care of your diamonds. Remember to take off your diamond rings, pendants or bracelets before entering the pool. Wearing them in the pool might loosen the settings of the diamonds present in your diamond jewelry.

Depending upon how frequently you wear your diamond jewelry and how you take care of it in day to day life, you need to decide on the frequency of professional cleaning required for your diamond jewelry. Those who wear more frequently may need to see the jeweler on a frequent basis. This may not be required if you take utmost care of your diamonds.

If you pay attention to your diamonds like you do to your body, your diamonds would glitter forever.

## **- How to Clean Diamonds**

Diamonds are often worn as necklaces, earrings, bracelets and hand rings. In fact, they are a very important component of jewelry fashion. There is an old saying “Diamonds are forever”. However, diamonds need to be cleaned and taken care of so that they retain their glow.

Since jewelry is always exposed to sweat, dust, body creams etc., it becomes necessary to clean them. Cleaning the diamonds or diamond studded jewelry along with other gemstones is an easy job and does not take much time. Diamonds are best cleaned by small machines called ultrasonic cleaners but you can also remove the dirt by following this simple process that can easily be carried out at home:

Soak the diamond jewelry in warm soapy water for a few minutes. But bear in mind not to use harsh detergents containing chlorine or other abrasive chemicals. Then clean with the help of a soft brush. Later, rinse it with distilled water. Pat dry with a clean, lint free and soft towel (and never touch the diamonds with bare hands). A lint free towel is important so that the diamonds do not get entangled in your hairy towel. Your diamonds would now start sparkling like new. Note that there are various liquid cleaners available in the market especially made for cleaning diamond jewelry. You can choose one of them if you are not sure of your detergents. In fact, it is better to buy a branded liquid detergent so that you do not harm your expensive and valuable diamonds. Ammonia is another chemical used for cleaning diamonds. This chemical is available on the counter in your nearby superstore. Just keep in mind to use the correct quantity to clean.

Proper cleaning of your jewelry makes you look beautiful.



## **- Traveling with Diamonds**

Diamonds symbolize love and affection. It means different things to different people. It may indicate love of a husband to his wife or affection of a father to his daughter. So, it needs to be cared for. Since jewelry is worn mostly at special occasions (and some of these occasions might be far away from where you live), you might need to travel with your diamonds/ diamond jewelry.

Does the thought of traveling with diamonds discomfort you? Does it make you think twice about carrying them along?

Well, this isn't a new thing. In olden times too, people found it difficult to carry diamond studded jewelry. The two main reasons for this were – safety and storage of diamond jewelry. And these concerns hold good in today's context too:

### **Safety of diamond jewelry**

Since diamonds are very expensive, robbers/muggers are always on the lookout for them. And you could easily become a target if you were not careful. One important tip here is to refrain from talking about your jewelry in public places (where there is a possibility of others hearing it and hence coming to know that you are carrying diamond jewelry with you). Also, store your diamond jewelry in a safe place. If you are staying in a hotel, use a safety deposit box (of course, the hotel should be a well-reputed one).

### **Storage of diamond jewelry**

Since diamonds are one of the hardest stones on earth, they can damage your soft gemstone jewelry. However, traveling with diamonds is easy if you have the especially designed jewelry travel cases with you. They are easily available in the market. If you are not able to get one, you can use soft muslin bags. But remember to keep diamonds separately from other soft gemstone jewelry. Diamonds are hard and may cause damage to other jewelry items.

Also, there are various jewelry cleaners available in the market. They give instant shine to your diamonds in the same way as we give the last touches to our makeup to look gorgeous. Remember, buying accessories for your diamonds is a long term investment and this will reward you in the long run.

## **- Is Insurance Required for Diamonds?**

Since crime has an increased manifold in the past few years, the need for all types of insurance has increased too. Since Diamond jewelry is a sure shot indication of wealth, it does attract thieves and robbers. They might either be after the diamond jewelry or your wealth in general. For this reason, a lot people keep their expensive jewelry in safety deposit boxes at banks and get them out only when they need it. Though this seems a good proposition, it does involve the hassle of going to bank again and again (and you still have the chances of getting robbed on the way or during the time you have the jewelry at home). Besides that, you also have the risk of losing your diamond jewelry through negligence or sheer bad luck (e.g., diamonds becoming loose and falling off from your jewelry).

So, how do you tackle this risk of losing your diamonds/ diamond jewelry?

Most people tackle this risk by getting their jewelry insured along with their household goods. However, this doesn't cover your risk fully. If any of the diamonds in your jewelry became loose and fell off when you were on holiday or away from home for work, your household insurance (in most likelihood) would not cover the loss. Hence, taking an insurance policy for different items of your diamond jewelry is much recommended.

However, getting the insurance is not difficult. You just need to get your jewelry appraised in order to determine the present value of your jewelry and get the insurance done from a reputed insurance company. Thus, for a small sum of money, you can buy your peace of mind. However, note that, most insurance companies do not reimburse you the amount of the lost or stolen diamond jewelry. They only replace it with something of an equal value. In such a case, insist on getting the item appraised by a known gemologist before accepting the item (even if a small fee needs to be paid to the gemologist, it's worth it).

## - Importance of Appraisals of Diamonds

Diamonds are well known as priced possessions. Though most people would just be concerned about wearing diamonds, it's quite important to know the value of your diamonds. An appraisal is the process that helps you know the current value of your diamonds and whether they are genuine or not.

The appraisal of diamonds is important, primarily for the following three reasons:

- **Insurance:** In order to get a separate insurance for your diamonds, you need to get them appraised (to get to know their current value). An appraisal is also required if the insurance company suggests replacing the lost diamonds instead of a cash payout (in this case the replacement diamonds will need to be appraised to determine their value for comparison with the lost item)
- **Sale of diamonds:** An appraisal is also important when buying or selling diamonds. You will surely be asked to get your diamonds appraised when you try to sell them. In the case of buying, it's your discretion to get the diamond appraised or not. If you are buying from a reputed shop, you would not need an appraisal but if you are buying from someone you don't know, you should surely ask for an appraisal from a reputed gemologist.
- **Inheritance/ settlements:** These are other scenarios where an appraisal is used for calculation of value of diamonds. The value is then used for computation of inheritance and for settlements.

An appraisal of diamonds is also important for the purpose of customs (and computation of customs tax) but this is seldom used by people.

So the appraisal of diamonds is important and you do incur a fee for appraisal; but it is really worth it.

## **- A Guide to Certified Diamonds**

Diamonds are one of the most attractive and most expensive forms of jewelry. However, compromising on quality to save on money is not recommended. You should always buy certified diamonds even though they are a bit expensive than the non certified ones. With certified diamonds, you are assured of quality.

What are certified diamonds? Are they some different kind of diamonds?

Certified diamonds are the diamonds which come together with a detailed quality report from a gemologist belonging to a reputed laboratory. The gemologist examines minute details of the diamond under a microscope and gives a detailed report about the diamond. Note that the certification of diamonds is different from their appraisal. While the former is used to indicate the quality and characteristics of a diamond, the latter are used to assess its current value.

Why should we go for certified diamonds?

We, as a layman, cannot evaluate all the complex factors that govern a diamond's quality and pricing. Though we can study and research a lot about diamonds (e.g., through books and internet), we are bound to miss the minute details about diamonds. So, a certificate developed by an expert can give us the assurance before buying.

The most acknowledged diamond certification laboratories in the world are the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) and the American Gem Society (AGS). There are other certification laboratories too, however, you must only go for a reputed one (ask for their credentials before buying your precious jewelry from them).

Another important advantage of buying certified diamonds is that they can be easily resold.

Insurance companies also recognize certified diamonds.

With certified diamonds, comparisons can be made between diamonds of similar weight and structure in various shops. This allows you to get the best price without compromising on quality. So, it is wise to shop for certified diamonds.

## **- Are Man-Made Diamonds an Alternative to Pure Mined Diamonds?**

Man-made diamonds, as the name suggests, are diamonds created synthetically with the help of modern technology. These man-made diamonds are an alternative to pure mined diamonds.

In fact, these man-made diamonds have become quite popular in recent times. Here are the reasons for the popularity of man-made diamonds:

**Price:** The main reason behind the popularity of man-made diamonds is their price. Synthetic diamonds cost about a fraction of the pure mined diamonds. Thus synthetic diamonds (or simulations of diamonds) make it possible for people who cannot afford real diamonds, to adorn diamonds. Good quality synthetic diamonds can hardly be distinguished from real diamonds.

**Fashion:** Diamonds are in fashion. They come in various colors, shapes and sizes. Diamond jewelry comes in various designs. However, for most people, the cost of real diamonds makes it impossible to buy new designs of diamond jewelry on a frequent basis. With synthetic diamonds, you can go for new jewelry designs much more often (since they are much cheaper compared to real diamonds).

**Money utilization:** You can invest the money saved through using man-made diamonds (instead of real diamonds) in other areas like purchase of a house, your life insurance or in the upbringing of your children. Since good quality man-made diamonds look almost like pure diamonds, you can still fulfill your desire of wearing diamonds.

**Quality:** Though nothing can beat the real diamonds, there are various man-made diamonds which are so identical to the pure diamonds that even the jeweler cannot make out the difference with his naked eye. For example Moissanite, a synthetic material, is used to imitate diamonds pretty well. These synthetic diamonds look stunningly beautiful and are almost 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the price of a diamond. They are commonly used as an alternative to costly diamonds. Other man made diamonds are Cubic Zirconia, White Sapphire etc.

**Safety:** With man-made diamonds, you do not have to worry about theft/robbery. No insurance is required. No appraisal is required.



## - Different Types of Synthetic Diamonds

Diamonds are considered to be a woman's silent friend. But since they are very expensive, every woman is not able to fulfill her dreams of having one. But with the advent of man-made diamonds (synthetic diamonds), every dream is now being fulfilled. Man-made diamonds are reasonably priced and easy on the pocket.

There are various types of synthetic diamonds available in the market. Some of the commonly used man-made diamonds are:

**Cubic Zirconia** - Cubic Zirconia is one of the best alternatives to diamonds. The main reason behind their immense popularity is their low cost. A beautiful necklace made using Cubic Zirconia could cost only \$100-\$200 compared to a real diamond necklace that would cost thousands of dollars. Cubic Zirconia is as beautiful and brilliant as diamonds. They can be purchased online too where you can get huge collection of colorful, stylish and low-cost man-made diamonds.

**Sapphire:** Sapphire is a transparent gemstone. The crystals present in the colorless stone may have patches of blue color. But the stone can be given uniformity by skillful cutting. Though the radiance of sapphire is not equivalent to diamonds, good quality sapphires can be used as a substitute, if price is a constraint.

**Moissanite:** This is yet another material that is used for making synthetic diamonds. In fact, diamonds made using Moissanite are so brilliant that it's quite difficult to tell them apart from a real diamond. So, you can get a really good diamond effect for a low price.

Thus man made diamonds save a lot of money and fulfill your desire of having multiple diamond jewelry. This would not have been possible if you shop for mined diamonds.

## **- How to Distinguish Between Real and Imitated Diamonds**

With the advent of modern processing techniques and high end equipments we are able to create diamonds called man-made diamonds or synthetic diamonds. They are so alike the mined diamonds that it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two. A lot of people get confused between a real and a synthetic diamond. Even jewelers cannot, sometimes, make out a fake diamond from the real one with a naked eye. Here are some of the guidelines which would help you determine whether the diamond you possess is mined or synthetic:

- The best way to determine the ingenuity of a diamond is to get it checked by a reputed jeweler. Take the diamond to a jeweler who has a gemologist certificate and get your possession recognized by paying a small fee. There are various tests available in the market which can distinguish between man made and mined diamonds.
- Clean the piece of your diamond jewelry and check for the carat marking. Do you see any? Generally pure diamonds have carat marking inside their bands.
- Mined diamonds are one of the hardest substances known to man on earth. So if you see any abrasion on the gem there are chances that it might be a synthetic diamond.
- Mined diamonds have perfect settings. This can be checked by getting the gem appraised.

By just following these simple guidelines you can get a definitive idea about the ingenuity of your gem.

## **- Getting Married: Buy an Exclusive Diamond Ring for Your Fiancée**

You must have read stories about a beautiful girl thinking about a tall dark handsome man proposing to her with a diamond ring. It is not a fantasy. Whenever we plan for a wedding, the first thing that comes to our mind is the "Wedding Ring". We often spend hours together to think about the perfect wedding ring and diamond wedding ring best fits the suit.

A man often dreams about the glow on his fiancée's face when he would gift the wedding ring to her. However, there are various things to look for before buying an expensive diamond ring.

If you are planning to shop together for your wedding rings, it would be easy to know about each other choices. But if you are shopping alone, ask your fiancée about her choice. Does she like a solitaire ring or a three-stone diamond ring? Would she like to go for a large diamond or a small diamond? It is generally believed that bigger the fingers, bigger should be the diamond. But decide it yourself; the ring should not look huge or gaudy on your hands.

Next thing to look at is whether you would go for loose or set diamonds. You can buy loose diamonds and get the setting done later. Here, the advantage is in terms of low cost and the availability of a lot of different shapes for your choice. You can get a yellow gold or platinum diamond setting for your ring. But generally, when we speak of weddings, yellow gold is the most popular. Diamond set in a platinum setting is the most expensive while diamond set in a yellow gold setting is cheaper.

The most important thing to look at before buying your wedding ring is the budget. Estimate your budget. Remember, you have many expenses to plan-for after the marriage too. You should not spend all your savings on the wedding ring.

## **- Innovative Ideas on “How to Surprise Your Love with Diamonds”**

People often say that diamonds are a girl's best friends and 'Diamonds are forever'. They never perish. The best moment in any girl's life is when she is gifted diamond jewelry.

“I always remember the moment when my husband gifted me a diamond necklace on our fifth wedding anniversary in a very special way. We had been on a holiday to Switzerland. Luckily we got a booking in the same hotel where we stayed on our honeymoon. We had just finished our dinner. As soon as we came back to the room, I found a chair decorated with red roses and a beautiful diamond necklace was laid over it. I was surprised. He had really made the anniversary memorable.”

Yes, diamonds are the best gifts for special occasions like wedding anniversaries. However, presenting them in an unusual and charming way can really make the moment memorable for ever. Here are some more ideas:

- You can gift your wife or girl friend diamond jewelry when both of you are on a long drive or on a beach.
  
- If she is fond of gardening and you have indoor plants in your home, you can hang the diamond earrings on the branches. As soon as she comes to water the plants in the morning, she would discover it.
  
- If your love is fond of cooking, you can hide the diamond gift in one of the food containers. Remember to empty the container. Otherwise, particles of the food might enter the diamond jewelry.

- Keep the diamond bracelet next to her dress which she would be wearing the next day to her office. Take care to keep it safely and prominently. She should not miss it in a hurry. Otherwise, you can keep it close to her cosmetics near the dressing table.
  
- Surprise her with a diamond jewelry gift box in the bed-tea tray.

There are many ideas with which you can make your beloved's day memorable. You just need to think about it. This magical gift along with a surprise presentation would do wonders.

## **- Wholesale Diamond Jewelry**

Diamond jewelry business is easy to start if you have sufficient cash and a good reputation. This business does not require much space for storing and you can even start it from home. However, you will need to make appropriate safety arrangement. Diamond jewelry can be packed easily in boxes and can be parceled across to any place in the world (but be sure to adhere to the laws of the countries).

The first step in this business is to buy diamond jewelry. There are many things to look at before you buy the jewelry in bulk.

- Just like apparel business, diamond jewelry business also changes with time and season. You should take care that the vendor you are buying from has good knowledge about the latest trends in the market.
- The vendor should have GIA certified diamonds. Certified diamonds are easily to genuine and are easy to sell. Customers look for certified diamonds so that they can be assured of quality.
- The vendor should have a good reputation in the market. If the vendor is well respected in the market, you would have an advantage in getting customers for yourself. So whenever you are buying diamonds in bulk, check for the reputation of the vendor along with the price they offer for the jewelry. Sometimes some manufacturers quote low price for their diamond jewelry but the jewelry is not up to the mark. Such jewelry would create problems for your business and you might lose customers.

- Ask the manufacturer if he would be providing you custom jewelry and other services like resizing or repairing.

It is easy to start a diamond jewelry online business if you are not short of capital and have a good rapport with the wholesaler.

## - Before You Go Diamond Shopping

“A Diamond is forever” and for most people diamonds become their most prized possessions. Often used as a symbol of love, diamonds are also referred to as a girl’s best friend. So, buying a diamond involves a lot of careful analysis and planning. Let’s have a look at some important points that you need to think out before you actually go for diamond shopping:

- **Budget:** Diamonds are pretty expensive. In fact, diamond jewelry is one of the most expensive ones in market today. However, like most types of jewelry, diamonds too are available in different price ranges. So, the first step is to get an idea of the current price range of diamonds and fix a budget for them. Internet is one good way of getting an idea about the price of diamonds. However, you should only be visiting the websites of renowned diamond retailers (since there are enough of fake retailers too who could mislead you by offering diamonds for a very low price).
- **Type of diamonds:** Here we are referring to the two types of diamonds i.e. the mined diamonds (or the real diamonds) and the synthetic diamonds (man made diamonds). Though no synthetic diamond can match the glamour of real diamonds, some synthetic diamonds are so good in quality that you cannot really make out the difference with the naked eye. If your budget is real low and if you don’t find an appropriate real diamond for your budget, you can surely go for synthetic diamonds. Synthetic diamonds are much cheaper than the real ones and you will find a large variety of them in various jewelry shops.



- **Loose or set:** This is another thing that you need to decide on before you go diamond-shopping. Besides coming as part of diamond jewelry, diamonds are also available loose. So, if you want to get custom diamond jewelry made, you can buy just the stones (diamonds) and get them set in the metal of your choice. Also, if you buy loose diamonds, you can even choose a custom design for your jewelry and the arrangement of diamonds that you would like in the design.

## - Tips for Buying Diamonds

Diamonds are the best and the most glamorous form of jewelry. However, the process of buying a diamond calls for a lot of thought. You need to think out a lot of things before you actually go looking for diamonds. This involves deciding on your budget and whether you want to go for a real diamond or a synthetic one; and again, loose diamonds or diamonds that are already set. Once you have made all these decisions, you go for the actual diamond shopping. Here are a few tips on diamond shopping:

- **Buying avenues:** You can buy diamonds at either the shops in the high street (and shopping centers) or through the internet (online shopping). However, you need to be extra careful while buying diamonds through the internet (since there are a lot of dupes operating too) – check their credentials, references and their return policy. When shopping at high street, you again need to ensure that the shop is a well established one and has a good reputation. Do not buy diamonds from shops that have been temporarily set up for a couple of days only.
  
- **Certified diamonds:** Always go for certified diamonds (applicable to real diamonds only). Certified diamonds always come with a detailed report that tells about the quality and characteristics of the diamond. This gives you assurance about the ingenuity of the diamond and also helps you compare the price of various diamonds (at different shops) on the same grounds of quality.
  
- **Shapes of diamonds:** Diamonds come in various shapes, and different shapes suit different people. So, have a look around and check what shapes look best on you. This is especially true if you are buying diamond earrings or finger rings. However, a lot of diamond jewelry uses multiple diamonds of different shapes in their designs. In such a case, the overall look of the jewelry is what you would look for.

- **Comparing with naked eyes:** If you just want to do a first round of comparison (without getting into the reports etc), you can check for the yellowish tinge in the diamonds. The lesser the yellowish-ness, the better the quality. Comparisons are best done in sunlight (so check with the shopkeeper if he can allow that).

## **- The Biggest Cut Diamond in the World**

Diamonds are fascinating. In fact, everything about diamonds is truly fascinating. Tales about diamonds and about emperors who wore diamonds are prevalent all over the world. There are stories about emperors invading other kingdoms and taking away diamonds as booty. Some of the diamonds have become quite famous over a period of time and have found a place in the history. Besides the tales and stories, these diamonds have also become famous because of their shape, size, color or beauty. Since these diamonds are special they are either kept in museums (or are found at homes of millionaires).

Some popular names that spring to mind include 'Hope diamond', 'Cullinan I' diamond and 'Regent diamond'. 'Cullinan I' is one of those diamonds that catch the fancy of a lot of people because of its large size. In fact, 'Cullinan I' is the largest cut diamond in the world. Quite a lot of people who visit 'The Tower of London' (an attraction in London, UK) do so just to get a glimpse of 'Cullinan I'. You also have another large cut diamond that accompanies Cullinan I in 'The Tower of London'. This is called 'Cullinan II'. So, 'Cullinans' are the largest cut diamonds in the world. Unlike 'Cullinans', the 'Hope diamond' is not famous for its size. 'Hope diamond' is famous mainly because of its peculiar property of emitting reddish color when exposed to light.

A lot of people fantasize about such diamonds. Though you cannot get these diamonds as part of your jewelry, reading about these diamonds and other such diamonds can really be a fascinating experience in itself. But don't worry, there are other diamonds that are available in the market and that you can easily buy and make part of your jewelry.

## **- Highest Quality Diamonds: Pink Diamonds**

Pink diamonds are the highest quality diamonds. These diamonds are rarer than most of the other, colored diamonds. The main quality that makes these diamonds so desirable is their color (pink color, as such, is the favorite of most women around the world). Though you hear a lot of stories about how pink diamonds were found etc etc; they seem to have gained popularity only after a Hollywood celebrity used it as part of the engagement ring.

It's the rarity of these diamonds that also makes them one of the most expensive diamonds. Some people are even buying pink diamond as an investment which can give them huge return few years down the line (well, this could actually be true since pink diamonds are really rare). Pink diamonds are beautiful for sure, however, the price of pink diamonds is so prohibitive that most people cannot even think of buying them (unless they want to part with their lifelong savings – and these savings should run into several thousand dollars). The price of pink diamonds is much dependent on their color concentration too.

So, if the real pink diamonds are so expensive can one never get to wear them?

Not really. Like other diamonds, synthetic pink diamonds are quite popular too. These are much cheaper compared to the real ones and look great. These synthetically produced diamonds are also available more easily than the real pink diamonds. Pink diamonds are especially good for use in pendants and earrings

In any case, diamonds of any kind are always a lasting momento of a special occasion and pink diamonds make for even better mementos.

## **- A Diamond is a Fashion in Itself**

It's hard to find a person who doesn't know what a diamond is. Almost everyone knows that diamonds are worn as jewelry. If you look back into history, you will find that diamond jewelry was much prevalent among kings and queens. In some parts of the world, diamonds were even associated with god and were considered to contain mysterious powers. At some places (e.g. in India) gods and goddesses are generally depicted with the use of a lot of diamond studded jewelry.

Today, wearing diamonds is a fashion in itself. Diamonds are available in various shapes and sizes. Though diamonds are generally known as colorless stones, they are now available in various colors too. However, diamonds cannot be worn alone; they have to be studded in other metals in order to create diamond jewelry. Diamond jewelry can range from diamond necklaces and diamond pendants to diamond earrings and diamond rings. Diamond rings (rather diamond engagement rings) are by and large the most popular form of diamond jewelry. Brilliant round cut diamonds are the most popular ones for engagement ones.

Also, the prohibitively high price of diamonds and diamond jewelry has given birth to synthetic diamonds that now form a different line of fashion altogether. So, people who cannot afford to buy original diamonds, go for jewelry made from such replicas (e.g. zirconia).

Besides the special skills that are required for cutting and polishing diamonds, diamond fashion is also about the design of diamond jewelry. Diamonds of various shapes and sizes might all be used as part of design of a single piece of jewelry. Moreover, the arrangement of various diamonds might itself form a design. Diamonds might also be set into different metals hence bringing about another kind of variation in the design of diamond jewelry.

So, really 'A Diamond is a fashion in itself'.

## **- Diamond Shopping: Avoiding the Scams**

Diamonds are one of the most expensive stones in the world of jewelry. A simple diamond ring can cost thousands of dollars. Quality of diamonds is gauged using four main characteristics: Carat, Cut, Clarity and Color. The grading of diamonds is done for each of these four characteristics and the prices of diamonds can vary significantly from one grade to another. Thus a small lie (by the retailer) about the grades could mean a difference of thousands of dollars in price. This is one reason why it's important to buy only certified diamonds and only from reputed shops. Some people might fall for price and go for uncertified diamonds; thinking that it's a bargain. However, if you do that, you could end up getting duped (unless you yourself are a gemologist).

The disreputed retailers (and even some reputed ones) might bluff you by telling you stories about the ingenuity and high quality of a diamond that is actually a low grade one e.g. they might tell you a rounded-off figure for the carat grading (and hence charge you much more than the actual value of the diamond). In any case, knowledge about the grades and the associated value of diamonds of various grades can help you in making a wise decision when buying diamonds.

Some other scams include use of lights (colored lights) in order to make the diamonds look much better than they actually are. This is one reason why it is suggested that you ask the retailer to show the diamonds that you like in plain sunlight.

Another trick deployed by the retailers is to set the diamonds in the jewelry in such a way that the flaws are hidden to the naked eye. Though this doesn't affect the appearance of your jewelry, it does affect its price (the diamond retailer might charge you higher for the diamonds than their actual worth).

Some other scams include use of lasers to hide imperfections and use of artificial coloring or polish (that is not visible to the naked eye) to give a particular tint to the diamond and make it look more expensive than it actually is.

## **- Benefits from Diamonds**

Diamond is a shining stone that is found in mines. Though we have synthetic diamonds too, the word 'Diamond' generally refers to the naturally found diamond. Diamond is beneficial to human beings in two ways (don't be astonished; most people know just one of the two uses):

### **As Jewelry**

This is the most important use of diamond. In fact, this use of diamonds is so popular that it completely overshadows the other important use of diamonds. Since ancient times, these shining stones have been used by humans to enhance their looks (as a jewelry item). In the olden days, the technology for refining (cutting and polishing) the diamonds was not advanced enough. But still, diamonds were worn as attractive jewelry. Today, the technology is much more sophisticated and the cutting and polishing of diamonds makes them look even more attractive. Nowadays diamonds are cut in many different ways in order to enhance their beauty further. They are cut in various shapes and in such a way so as to retain the maximum Carat value too.

### **As Cutters**

A lot of people don't know about this use of diamonds. However, this too is a very important use. Diamonds that are not gem-grade (i.e. unsuitable for making jewelry) or that are just too small for use in jewelry are often used for industrial application. This use of diamonds is based on another important property of diamonds i.e. their hardness. In fact, diamonds are one of the hardest stones known on earth. In the industry, diamonds are used for cutting, drilling, grinding, and polishing. Though diamonds could be put to some other industrial uses too, these are the most important ones (as such, the supply of diamonds is not enough for considering its use in other areas). So, diamonds are used for saw blades, drill tips and for other cutters and grinders.

Though the use of diamonds in jewelry is more proclaimed, their industrial application cannot be ignored in any case.



## **- Diamonds: How to Make Them Look Better on You?**

Mention of diamonds conjures up images of sparkling wedding rings and necklaces. Diamonds come in different shapes and sizes (in fact, we should say that diamonds are cut into various shapes and sizes in order to make visible their true glamour).

Some people think that bigger diamonds are better. But this is really a myth. The quality of diamonds is not determined by their size (carat) alone. There are 3 other factors that go into determining the quality and value of diamonds. These are Cut, Clarity and Color.

The suitability of diamonds also varies from person to person. So, diamond jewelry that looks great on one person might look just ok on another. Different diamonds suit different personalities; so a big heart-shaped, blue-colored diamond could look good on one person but not so good on another. Though, certain diamond shapes are suggested for some particular purposes (e.g. oval shaped finger rings are said to give an elongated look to hand), blending of diamonds with the overall personality is what matters.

The setting of diamonds can make a big difference with regards to how good the set diamonds look on you. Different kinds of settings are used for different purposes e.g. some settings could make the diamonds look larger while others could help in accentuating other characteristics of the jewelry (or the person itself).

Besides the shape of individual diamonds and their setting, the overall arrangement of diamonds (and other stones) plays an important role too. Some designs could be more complex and spread out while others could be more simple and concentrated. You should try our various styles in order to determine what suits you best.

Your overall dress and make-up can make a big difference to how good or bad your diamond jewelry looks on you. Some kinds of outfits can really accentuate your jewelry and make you look great.

You also have the option of buying loose diamonds and getting custom jewelry made for you. This could turn out quite costly but will provide you with the surety that your jewelry will really look good on you and make you feel on top of the world.

## **- How to Sell A Diamond**

There are many reasons why you may want to sell a diamond that you own. Perhaps you've gotten divorced, or you are strapped for cash. The reasons why don't really matter – getting the best possible price is what counts! The way to obtain the best price for the diamond is to not be in a rush. Slow down, and carefully consider all of your options – there are many.

First, have the diamond appraised. In fact, have it appraised by two or three jewelers to get an accurate idea of the diamonds value. Tell the appraiser that you want the Rapaport Value. This is the wholesale value of the diamond, and it basically tells you the highest price that you can sell your diamond for. If your diamond has no certificate, you should consider getting a certificate from GIA. This may help you get a better price for the diamond as well.

First, try to sell the diamond yourself, to people you know. Friends and family members may be interested. If you don't have any luck with friends or family members, you should turn to outside sources. Absolutely avoid pawn shops! A pawn shop will only offer you about 10% of what the diamond is worth! Also avoid offers of selling the ring on consignment. There are many things that can go wrong, and there is no shortage of diamond scams – even in well known jewelry stores.

If the diamond is important, you should strongly consider auctioning it off through one of the famous auction houses, such as Christie's or Sotheby's. If it isn't what is considered an 'important' diamond or a high-end diamond, you should try to sell it to an individual using classified ads, or even eBay. However, selling to an individual that you do not know could put you in danger – especially if the diamond is worth a lot of money.

Your final option should be a jewelry store. It is vital that you not let your diamond out of your sight while in the jewelry store – you might find that the diamond you walked in with is not the same diamond that you walk out with! The jeweler will try to tell you that your diamond is of poor quality or low weight. Inevitably, there will be some problem with the diamond. This is where your appraisal and/or certificate will come in handy.

If the jeweler is fair, they will offer you between 60% and 80% of the value of the Rapaport Value. Do not accept anything less than this. Again, do not let the diamond out of your sight until you have been paid for it.

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