

"There's no such thing as a secondhand diamond," he responded.

But Martin, who grew up working in the pawn industry before becoming a gemologist, knew exactly what I meant. He'd had people ask to look at rings only to hand them back over, claiming to have gotten "bad vibes." But he's also onto something when he says secondhand diamonds just aren't a thing. The average diamond, he said, will change hands many times before it ever makes it into a piece of jewelry, including after it's mined and sorted, when it's cut, and when it's inspected and sold. Martin has found a lot of people will let go of their prohibition on "used" diamonds once they take this into account.

Upon completing his appraisal, Martin explained the description he'd written about my 14-carat "white gold, three piece cathedral pattern diamond wedding set" with its "princess cut diamond center stone" and 12 "larger round brilliant diamonds" plus 30 "smaller round cut brilliant diamonds," for that aforementioned total of 43 stones weighing in at a total of 1.5 carats in a ring weighing 7.7 grams. The value he assigned to it was more than I expected: \$4,400.

"You intend to sell it?" Martin asked.

"I do," I said, again rushing to explain. "I mean, I offered it to *him*. After all, he was the one who sunk the money into it. But he said no. And, yeah, I just kind of figured I'd pop it onto Facebook Marketplace for, like, a quarter of your appraisal value."

Martin gently advised me to consider my options.

"Don't give it away," he said.

PLAYING WITH THE BANDS

People who sell their wedding sets after a divorce will most often lose money on them—but there are a still lot of options for sellers, and they're not all created equal. I told Martin about discovering this myself when I'd flirted with the idea of selling the ring last year.

I'd taken my rings first to a pawn shop hoping to get an appraisal but was turned off when I realized the store offered two varieties: a free appraisal for people selling to the shop and a paid appraisal for those wanting official documents. I told myself I worried the appraisal value might differ depending on which option I chose. Maybe I just wasn't ready.

In the months that followed, I read up on online businesses that buy and sell old wedding

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A SECONDHAND DIAMOND."

BRADLEY MARTIN
GEMOLOGIST

sets. They have names like "I Do Now I Don't," and they get largely positive reviews. I considered mailing my rings off, awaiting an offer letter and receiving a check, but this didn't feel right either. Maybe I still wasn't ready, but I never do business online—no Amazon, Etsy or eBay—and this seemed like a strange place to start.

After that, I landed on the idea of selling my set on Facebook or

Craigslist—and that's where I'd been stuck, for months, until finally putting the wheels in motion by seeing Martin for an appraisal.

"If I were you, I might take it down to Brian at Diamond Vault and see if he's interested in putting it on consignment," Martin said.

I hadn't considered this option. Brian Brewer at Diamond Vault had sold my ex-husband the wedding bands that went on either side of my engagement ring. I'd taken the rings back there for years for cleanings, told everyone who asked about them how much I loved the store. My bands were purchased new, and I'd never realized the shop sold consigned jewelry, too. I told Martin I'd give it a try.

I was pleased when I arrived at Diamond Vault and found that Brewer still remembered me. He offered his condolences for the circumstances that brought me back in after so long but told me he was happy to take my wedding set on consignment. He'd send it off to have it cleaned and the prongs repaired. If it sold, I'd receive \$1,700—a fair bit more than I'd hoped to make on it.

"You can go ahead and list it on Facebook Marketplace, too, if you want," Brewer explained. "If it sells there, just come pick it up."

"I wouldn't owe them anything?" I asked. "Really?" It was the first time since I'd begun considering the sale that I didn't feel uneasy. I made the deal.

As of press time, the wedding set has returned from repairs and is up for sale at Diamond Vault. The prongs are newly tipped. The three bands—which were soldered together after my wedding—have been separated again. Someone might want to purchase them individually, I suppose. And something about their being apart has helped me to stop thinking of them as mine. Brewer said there's a good chance they won't be mine for long. With Valentine's Day around the corner, he thinks the rings will sell quickly. I hope they do sell soon—and I hope they bring joy to whomever buys them. □



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