

## Fashion Action

Healthy & Green Fashion

Innovative Design

### Special Events

- Eco Wedding
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- Green Holiday
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## Pretty in Pastels




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## Be Conscious: Choose Conflict-Free Diamonds

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Society has always had high regard for the exquisitely beautiful and valuable diamond. The "girl's best friend" is a symbol of love and affection, especially when given to a woman by a loved one. The diamond is truly breathtaking, but in some countries, there are substantial costs for the beauty of these gems. Mining for conflict diamonds (or "blood diamonds") often involves **child soldiers, slave labor, fatalities, and unjust wars.**

**Human rights** are important to our Hearts team, which is why we work hard to create ethical jewelry. As a consumer, you can use your purchasing power to seek out alternatives to conflict diamonds, such as upcycled and refashioned jewelry pieces.



## Quick Facts: Deadly Impacts of Conflict Diamonds

- **6-7 day work weeks for diamond mining child laborers:** Thousands of children work in conflict diamond mines. They do not attend school, and they work long days, six or seven days a week.<sup>[i]</sup> They must perform difficult physical tasks that involve hazards like crawling through narrow mineshafts and or frequent landslides.<sup>[ii]</sup>
- **100,000+ child soldiers in Africa:** Because conflict diamonds fuel wars, child soldiers are forced to fight as adults in adult wars. As of 2004, as many as 100,000 child soldiers as young as nine were fighting in armed wars in Africa.<sup>[iii]</sup>
- **1 million diamond diggers:** A million diamond diggers in Africa earn less than \$1 a day.<sup>[iv]</sup>
- **50,000 dead in Sierra Leone war fueled by blood diamonds:** Profits from the diamond mines- supported by child soldiers, child laborers, and adult slaves – finance armed wars and conflicts. These wars involve inhumane practices such as rape, torture, and slavery involving children.<sup>[v]</sup> Diamonds fueled a ten-year long conflict in Sierra Leone that claimed the lives of 50,000 people.<sup>[vi]</sup>

## Take Action! Upcycled and Conflict-Free Diamonds

1. **Upcycle family's heirlooms for a conflict-free engagement ring:** Instead of buying new diamond jewelry, you can upcycle your family's heirloom pieces. Be sure to bring up the subject lightly with your family members, and assure them that upcycling it is a great way to ensure a conflict-free engagement. Sensitively negotiating changes to the ring is also important. You can also upcycle gems and **recycle and reuse gold from old rings** of any kind to make a one-of-a-kind wedding ring.
2. **Shop for refashioned or recycled diamond jewelry:** If you don't have heirloom pieces of your own, why not shop for refashioned pieces – those that are redesigned using other jewelry and accessories. You can refashion diamonds or any kind of jewelry into a brand new piece. Search online for jewelry refashioners in your local community or search online for refashioned jewelry from sustainable sources such as **greenKarat**, a **Green America** approved business that specializes in creating eco jewelry from recycled precious metals and gems.
3. **Choose conflict-free diamonds:** If you want something brand new, then choose conflict-free diamonds from reliable sources. One of the most trusted sources of conflict-free diamond engagement or wedding rings is **Brilliant Earth**.
4. **Buyer beware: Problems with certified conflict-free diamonds:** The **Kimberley Process** is a diamond certification program that focuses on preventing the trade of conflict diamonds, but unfortunately the members of the Kimberley Process have not dealt with problem cases as they should. First, it doesn't require diamonds to be traced to their origins, which means banned diamonds are often smuggled out of conflict countries and traded as conflict-free in other regions. Additionally, though certified diamonds are only required to *not* fund the *rebel* side of a war, they do not have to be free of slavery, child labor, rape, beating, or torture. Unfortunately, the Kimberley Process is the only method of certification for conflict-free diamonds at this time, so buyer beware.
5. **Go diamond-free:** A less expensive option is to go diamond-free when creating or picking out a wedding or engagement ring. Choose an upcycled pearl, sapphire, or go gem-free altogether. Or think outside the box with a wooden ring such as some of those offered by Hearts!



## Dig Deeper: Conflict Diamonds

Stay updated on current news about conflict diamonds at [Conflict Free Diamonds](#).

- [Amnesty International](#) is always doing research and working to stop child slavery and slave diamond workers.

- Fight alongside campaigns to end the war against child soldiers by joining [Invisible Children](#).

Images By: [lisahumes](#) and [Lara604](#)

## + References

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it might not be reflected in revenue or attendance or TV numbers

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