

The American Way of Death Revisited: An Exploration of American Funeral Practices

Death is an inevitable part of life, and every culture has its own unique ways of dealing with it. In the United States, the way we approach death has undergone a significant evolution over the past century. The American Way of Death, as it is often called, is a complex and fascinating phenomenon that reflects our changing attitudes towards mortality, religion, and consumerism.

The Early Years

In the early days of American history, death was a much more public and communal affair. Funerals were typically held in the home of the deceased, and family and friends would gather to mourn and pay their respects. The body of the deceased was often laid out in a coffin in the parlor, and visitors would come to view it.



The American Way of Death Revisited by Jessica Mitford

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1245 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

X-Ray : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 320 pages

FREE

DOWNLOAD E-BOOK



Coffins were usually made of wood, and they were often quite elaborate. The more expensive coffins were made of mahogany or rosewood, and they were often lined with velvet or satin. The body of the deceased was typically dressed in their finest clothes, and they were often buried with personal items such as jewelry or photographs.

Funerals were also often religious occasions. Ministers or priests would lead services, and prayers would be said for the deceased. The funeral procession to the cemetery was often a solemn affair, and it was not uncommon for the entire community to turn out to pay their respects.

The Rise of the Funeral Home

In the late 19th century, the funeral home began to emerge as a new institution in American society. Funeral homes offered a range of services, including embalming, burial, and cremation. They also provided a more comfortable and private setting for funerals, which appealed to many families.

As funeral homes became more popular, the traditional home funeral began to decline. By the early 20th century, most funerals were being held in funeral homes.

The Commercialization of Death

The rise of the funeral home also led to the commercialization of death. Funeral homes began to offer a wide range of products and services, from caskets to flowers to burial plots. This led to an increase in the cost of funerals, and it also made it easier for families to spend more money on their loved one's funeral.

The commercialization of death has also led to a number of criticisms. Some critics argue that funeral homes are more interested in making a profit than in providing a meaningful service to families. Others argue that the focus on expensive funerals has led to a devaluation of the death experience.

The Modern American Way of Death

The American Way of Death has continued to evolve in the 21st century. Today, there is a greater emphasis on personalization and customization of funerals. Families are choosing to have funerals that reflect the unique personality of their loved one. This may include choosing a favorite color scheme, playing their favorite music, or having a special reading or tribute.

There is also a growing trend towards cremation. Cremation is a more affordable option than burial, and it is also more environmentally friendly. In addition, cremation allows families to keep their loved one's ashes in an urn, which can be a source of comfort and remembrance.

The American Way of Death has undergone a significant evolution over the past century. The rise of the funeral home, the commercialization of death, and the growing emphasis on personalization have all shaped the way we approach death in the United States. Today, there is a wide range of options available to families, and they can choose to have a funeral that reflects their own unique beliefs and values.

The American Way of Death Revisited by Jessica Mitford

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

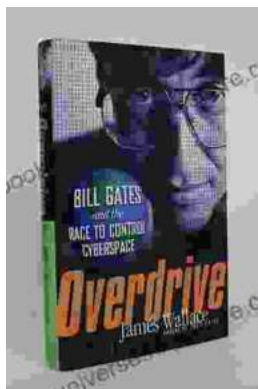
File size : 1245 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

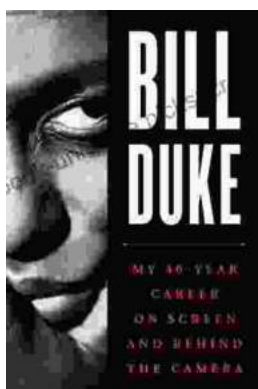


Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 320 pages



The Race to Control Cyberspace: Bill Gates's Plan for a Digital Divide

Bill Gates has a vision for the future of the internet. In his book, The Road Ahead, he argues that the internet will become increasingly important...



My 40 Year Career On Screen And Behind The Camera

I've been working in the entertainment industry for over 40 years, and in that time I've had the opportunity to work on both sides of the camera. I've...