
A FREE PLANNING WORKBOOK

The Memorial Tattoo Planning and Safety Workbook

For honoring a person, or a beloved pet

A quick start guide, an artist vetting questionnaire, a chain of custody tracker, a timing self-check, and a place for the story you carry into the chair.

from

MEMORIAL MERITS

memorialmerits.com/tattoo-with-pet-ashes

Share This Resource Freely

For tattoo artists, grief counselors, funeral directors, and anyone who walks alongside the bereaved

This workbook was built to be given away. If you are a tattoo artist who works with cremation ink, print a stack and keep them at the front desk. If you are a funeral director or a pet aftercare provider, hand them out alongside the urn or the cremation certificate. If you are a grief counselor or a chaplain, leave a few in the waiting room. The work in these pages helps people make a hard decision more carefully, and that is the only thing that matters.

Permitted Uses

You may print this workbook in any quantity. You may distribute physical copies to clients, patients, or anyone you believe will benefit from it. You may share the digital file by email or by linking to it on your website. You may include it in a larger care package, a memorial folder, or an aftercare kit. You may use it commercially within your own practice or studio.

One Requirement

Distribute it intact. Do not remove the Memorial Merits branding, the URL, the page numbers, the footer, or any of the links. Do not strip the cover. Do not edit the content. The workbook is free because it carries our name and our work back to readers who may need other things we offer. Removing the branding breaks that loop and erases the only thing we ask in exchange.

Not Permitted

Do not sell this workbook or charge for access to it. Do not repackage it under another brand. Do not edit the contents and redistribute the modified version. Do not strip the affiliate context on the closing page, the discount code, or the artist finder link. These are how the work continues.

If you want to distribute this in volume, or you want a co-branded version for your practice, write to memorialmerits@gmail.com. We are friendly to almost every reasonable ask.

How to Use This Workbook

Built for the one you are honoring, whoever they were

This workbook was built for two readers, the one preparing a memorial tattoo to honor a person they have lost, and the one preparing the same to honor a beloved pet. Both kinds of loss carry the same weight in the chair, and both deserve the same care in the planning. Wherever you read “the one you are honoring,” that phrase belongs to your story. Fill it in with whoever you are carrying.

You can complete this workbook on a phone or print it for the consultation, and most readers do both. The Quick Start Guide is the version you read in three minutes before you ever pick up a pen. The Tattoo Idea Planner, the Vetting Questionnaire, the Chain of Custody Tracker, and the Timing and Readiness Self-Check are the pages you actually fill out. The final pages are yours, an open space for the memory and the story you want to bring into the chair with you.

Before You Begin

There is no order you have to follow, and there is no scoring at the end. Skip what does not apply, and come back when something does. If a page brings something up that you are not ready to sit with yet, close the workbook and return to it when you can. The work is not going anywhere, and neither is the one you are honoring.

If you are reading this on behalf of someone else, a parent, a child, a partner, or a friend who is preparing to do this, let them fill it out themselves if they are able. The reflection is the reason the workbook exists. Filling it in for them removes the part of the process that matters most.

What This Workbook Is Not

This is not a sales document. You will not find pricing comparisons, product catalogs, or pressure to make a decision by any specific date. The only link to a provider appears on the final page, and it exists because our readers have asked us who we trust, not because we are trying to route you toward a purchase. If you decide not to get the tattoo at all, this workbook still did its job.

The only thing that matters is that the decision you make is one you can live with after.

Quick Start Guide

The five things to know before you read anything else

1. How Cremation Tattoo Ink Is Actually Made

A small portion of ash is sterilized at high temperature, ground to a fine powder, and blended into FDA-compliant tattoo ink by a specialist following proper handling protocols. The finished ink ships back in a sealed, documented vial. A licensed tattoo artist then uses it the same way they would use any other ink. The ash never touches an open wound by itself. Done correctly, it is safe.

2. How Much Ash You Actually Need

About a tablespoon. Sometimes less. The fear that you will need to give up a meaningful portion of the remains is one of the most common reasons families and pet parents hesitate, and it is almost always misplaced. The amount used is small enough that the rest of the ashes stay exactly where they are.

3. The Four Red Flags

Any provider who skips sterilization, refuses to provide chain of custody documentation, prices the work suspiciously low, or claims they can mix ash into ink on the spot in the studio is telling you exactly what they are. Walk away. The Vetting Questionnaire on the next page gives you the exact questions to ask and the answers that should end the conversation.

4. The Timing Question Nobody Answers Honestly

There is no number of months that makes a memorial tattoo right. Some people are ready in three weeks. Some are not ready in three years. Grief clarity matters more than the calendar, and a tattoo placed during the rawest weeks sometimes carries regret. The Timing and Readiness Self-Check will help you sit with whether you are sitting in the chair for the right reasons.

5. What Makes a Provider Trustworthy

Documentation. A real provider sends you sealed packaging, a chain of custody form, and a return label if any ash is left over. They answer questions plainly. They never rush you. They tell you what they cannot do as openly as what they can. If you have to chase them for answers, you have your answer.

Tattoo Idea Planner

For honoring a person or a beloved pet

Two parallel columns, equally weighted. Fill in whichever side belongs to your story, or both if you are planning more than one tattoo. Use the bottom of the page for sketches or notes that do not fit neatly into a field.

For a Person	For a Beloved Pet
The memory I want to carry: _____	The memory I want to carry: _____
Imagery that feels personal, not performative: _____	Imagery that feels personal, not performative: _____
Placement on my body: _____	Placement on my body: _____
Size, color, and style: _____	Size, color, and style: _____
What part of their life I want to honor: _____	What part of their life I want to honor: _____
What I do not want it to look like: _____	What I do not want it to look like: _____

Artist and Provider Vetting Questionnaire

Bring this to every consultation

Ten questions, the answers that should make you walk away, and a line for what they actually told you. If any answer falls inside the red flag range, treat it as a complete answer in itself.

1. Where is the ash sterilized, and what temperature do you use?

Red flag answer: "We do not sterilize" or any vague non-answer.

2. Can you provide a chain of custody form documenting every step?

Red flag answer: "We do not do paperwork."

3. Who actually produces the ink, and is it a separate facility from the tattoo studio?

Red flag answer: "We mix it here in the studio."

4. What FDA-compliant base ink do you use for the blend?

Red flag answer: They cannot name the ink, or they dodge the question.

5. How much ash do you require, and what happens to any unused portion?

Red flag answer: They want more than a tablespoon, or they cannot tell you what happens to unused ash.

6. How do you ship the ash and the finished ink?

Red flag answer: "Just put it in a regular envelope."

7. How long has the artist been working with cremation ink specifically?

Red flag answer: "This will be our first time."

8. Can you provide healed photos of cremation ink work, not just fresh tattoos?

Red flag answer: They only show fresh photos.

9. What is the total cost, and what does that include?

Red flag answer: A price too low to cover sterilization, ink production, and the tattoo itself.

10. What happens if I change my mind partway through the process?

Red flag answer: "We do not refund anything."

Need a starting point? [Search Engrave Ink's directory of artists already trained on cremation ink protocol.](#)

Chain of Custody Tracker

The page that earns this workbook

The ash leaves your hands and travels through a sterilization lab, an ink production specialist, a shipping carrier, and finally a tattoo artist. Document every handoff so that everyone in the chain knows they are being watched, because they are. Print this page, fill it in by hand, and keep it with the rest of your records in case you ever need to prove what happened and when.

#	Step	Date	Contact / Company	Initials	Notes
1	Ash leaves my possession				
2	Received by sterilization lab				
3	Sterilization complete				
4	Ink production complete				
5	Shipped to tattoo artist				
6	Received by tattoo artist				
7	Unused ash returned (if applicable)				

If a provider refuses to sign this page, they have given you your answer.

Timing and Readiness Self-Check

There is no calendar that grief obeys

Sit with each of these. Skip none of them. There is no scoring, and there are no wrong answers. The point is not to talk yourself out of the tattoo or into it. The point is to know which one you are doing.

1. When I imagine sitting in the chair, what feeling comes first?

2. Am I making this decision because I am ready, or because I am afraid the feeling will fade?

3. If I waited six more months, would I still want the same design?

4. Who am I doing this for, honestly?

5. What would I want to tell the version of myself who is sitting in the chair on the day of the tattoo?

6. If grief is a room, am I choosing this from inside the room, or after I have stepped outside of it?

The right time is the one you can live with after.

For Your Notes and the Story You Carry In

This page is yours

Write the story you want to bring into the chair with you. The memory you do not want to lose. The words you would say to them if they were here. There is no shape this has to take. There is only the page, and you, and the one you are honoring.

The memory I want to carry into the chair:

The words I would say to them if they were here:

Anything else I want to remember about this day:

Two Ways Forward

If you are ready, here is where the next step lives

You finished the workbook. The decision is yours, and it always was. The two boxes below are the only commercial things in this entire document, and they are here because our readers have asked us, again and again, who we trust. We trust Engrave Ink. They sterilize the ash properly, they document every handoff, they ship in sealed packaging, and they answer questions plainly. The discount code is exclusive to Memorial Merits readers.

Order Cremation Ink

Scan the code to visit Engrave Ink, the only specialist we recommend for sterilized, documented cremation tattoo ink for both human and pet ashes.



USE CODE **memorialmerits10** AT
CHECKOUT • SAVE 10%

ORDER CREMATION INK

Find a Trained Artist

Engrave Ink keeps a directory of tattoo artists already trained on cremation ink protocol. Search by location and walk into a consultation knowing the artist has done this work before.



FIND AN ARTIST NEAR YOU

If you decide not to get the tattoo, this workbook still did its job. The point was never the ink. The point was making the decision with clear eyes.

Thank you for trusting us with this part of your story.

Memorial Merits • [memorialmerits.com](https://www.memorialmerits.com)