

Who doesn't remember their first car?

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Mine was a two-door, hatchback, Honda Accord, with red velour seats and tinted windows. The previous owner had been a smoker, so no matter how many air fresheners I hung from the rear view mirror, the car always had a musty smell ...with a tinge of vanilla.



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But – oh – how I loved that car!

When my Dad handed me the keys, I was in heaven. Figuring life could not get any better. Of course, flunking my driver's license exam the next day, brought me back to earth real fast. But one week later, after multiple hours of my father attempting to teach me how to park "between the two white lines – NOOO - between the lines... between the lines, are you blind?!" I passed,

much to my Father's dismay.

My next car was a college graduation present, as my little Honda turned out to be – “a money pit” according to dear old Dad. My parents bought me a Nissan Sentra. I still wonder to this day what exactly the body of that car was made of. I think my daughter's Barbie car is made of the same material. When I traded “up” for the Nissan, I moved from velour to faux leather. The type of leather that your back sticks to when it's hot and you have to peel it off the seat. Add to that it was a five speed without power steering – but - man - did I love that car!

A few years later, like many other 20 somethings, I came to believe I needed something new and shiny. So, I bought myself a black Nissan Altima - fully loaded with a sunroof. Finally, I had that new car smell!

However, that new car came with something I had not had before - a car payment. It didn't bother me at first. But once it lost it's luster, I no longer enjoyed paying some guy \$359.00 a month to drive my dirty car. Needless to say, this was the car I had when we had our first child, our second and then our third –determined to not buy another car until I could afford my “dream” car.

As I struggled, however, to strap three car seats into the backseat of my Altima , my husband shook his head and said “ you need a van.” To be clear, “a mini-van” was not on my list of dream cars. Now I know a lot of you out there love your minivans but, seriously, its time to dream a bigger dream!

I, on the other hand, went kicking and screaming into my van. In fact, if you drove by the dealership the day I bought my minivan, it would look like someone was kidnapping me and throwing me into it.

Whereas, I love negotiating a good deal, when you don't care if you end up with the “prize”, you don't try that hard to win it. Each dealer would give me a low-bottom price, I'd say no and walk out the door. Until finally, one day, my husband made me pick one.

And I did. And boy – do I hate my van!

It's not necessarily a bad car. It gets us all where we need to go. What bothers me about it though is that it symbolizes the end of a carefree era – an era of driving for the sake of driving, windows down, music blaring and the only place I had to be was home by mid-night.

And then, of course, there is the even bigger issue of getting that monster car to fit ...between those two white lines!

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