

Embracing our trusted companions

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I said farewell to an old friend last week, but luckily made a new one in quick order.

Some of us are social creatures and make friends easily. Others take some prompting. I've always been a bit on the extroverted side, but in all honesty, I have but a few close friends.

We all have companions that we love, cherish and depend on. I have no regrets with my last relationship. He was dependable; didn't ask for much and served me well. I spent more time with him and I did with my children. Like my own, I appreciated him when he behaved, but chastized him when he didn't.

Alas, he outgrew his usefulness and while that sounds harsh, that's life.

These types of friendships are relatively easy to initiate and pretty simple to maintain. They do require regular maintenance and attention, though, to make them work flawlessly.

I will caution everyone, that these can be rather expensive undertakings. Similar to a bro-ship, they involve some initial outlay and we tend to throw money around to dress to impress. After a while, we back off, but put in just enough to keep things rolling along.

We knew each other well for the last two years or so. In that short time, we became really close.

I became quite familiar with his demeanour, quirks, strengths and weaknesses. We shared many laughs on the road together.

Things started to unravel a few months ago. The rumblings of dissent began. First, there were some late arrivals and no-shows.

Then, some last-minute appointments and check-ups.

He became quite cranky and we began to grow apart, even though we had this love-hate thing going on.

You hold on as long as you can. Neither of us wanted to let go or say good-bye.

So, you keep up appearances, continue to make excuses and carry on.

But we all know the time has to come to put your foot down and make a decision.

The situation was escalating to the point it was no longer safe. My 17-year-old daughter was starting to spend a lot of time with my friend and I had to ensure her safety and well being. She was really starting to warm up to him.

One day, while driving through Nobleton on King Road, I spotted her. She'd been around the block a few times, but I didn't mind at all. I do respect experience and wisdom.

Physically, she was nice enough, but nothing spectacular. Call me old-fashioned, but I don't mind plain and simple. Hey, I'm practical.

Before you get the wrong idea here, I am talking about a car.

Yes, an automobile.

I had to get rid of my 2002 Chev Venture mini-van because it was becoming a bit of an eyesore, and required several hundred dollars in repairs just to keep it on the road. I felt the money was better spent on a set of less troublesome wheels.

I'm not in a position to purchase a new car. In fact, I never have. The closest I came was buying a two-year-old Pontiac Bonneville from a GMC dealer. I loved her immensely. If only I was in the UK, I could get a brand-new car using one of the [car loans on lendingexpert.co.uk!](#)

So, I had to find something dependable that would last me a year or two, without costing me a fortune in repairs.

I scanned autotrader.ca and kijiji and called people I knew in the area.

I have driven past King Road Auto for years, maybe even decades. I always wanted to stop in and chat with the owner, Norm. It looked like a place where you could get a decent second-hand car like a [lifted single cab dodge](#) for a reasonable price.

I was right.

I found a 2002 Buick Century in very decent condition.

While Buick sedans have a reputation for being a bit of an "older person's car," they're popular and remain as one of the most dependable North American vehicles.

In fact, Buick is the oldest active North American automaker and oldest brand (along with Oldsmobile). In recent years, it has attracted a younger demographic and it's well positioned as a "premium marque" to compete with many entry level luxury imports.

I prefer a slightly larger car, to accommodate my slightly larger frame. In my opinion, a car is too small if the driver can reach across the passenger seat and open the passenger side window. However, a couple of my mid-life crisis impractical wish list cars include a VW Karmann Ghia and a Porsche 914.

I have had many love-hate relationships with automobiles in my life. I do love them. But I do hate the repair bills, and I've been on the receiving end of some whoppers.

I've heard that some automakers are vowing to have electric, or hybrid-only cars by 2050, thus ending the reign of the gas-powered horseless carriage. I'd be 87 that year, so I doubt I'd be in the market for a self-driving, solar-powered vehicle. But you never know.

I also plan to get my essence downloaded into a robot, but that's another story.

I hope to build a mutually beneficial relationship with my new gal.

To my special friends and loved ones, I salute you and thank you for being part of my life. They are, in no particular order:

A 1970 Camaro RS; 1973 Dodge Charger; 1973 Dodge Dart Sport; 1981 VW Rabbit; 1973 VW Super Beetle ...