

Wheels: An e-mail from Carol says, “You were very helpful sometime ago when I bought my car concerning an issue with my new purchase, so here I am again.

This is the same car, a 2001 Mercury Sable LS with approximately 114,500 miles. I have noticed when I want to back my car from my garage for the first time of the day, it appears to not be totally connected to reverse. I then place the car in park and then do the reverse again and it normally is fine. Why am I having this issue? The car is paid for and I have lost my job and can not afford a large repair bill, so I hope your news is not all bad news. I do not seem to have this problem at any other time than backing out of my garage. When I leave my sisters' houses I do not have a problem and they have driveways with inclines. Any help you can give me will be greatly appreciated. Thanks so much!”

Haldeman: This may be a normal condition as the transmission wears. The pump inside the transmission has to pump fluid to engage reverse and the pressure is higher in reverse than it is in drive. Have the fluid level checked and add some fluid if it is low. Maybe a slight leak over a long period of time has reduced the fluid level. Has wear occurred? Yes. Is it in need of an overhaul? No. I hesitate to recommend having the fluid changed as this sometimes can create problems. Your automatic uses a highly-friction modified fluid and it is normal for this fluid to become darker in color. If the fluid has been previously changed at about 50,000 mile to 60,000 miles, then I would suggest having the fluid changed. If it has not been changed, don't mess with it.

