

Wheels: An e-mail from Todd says, “Due to financial constraints, I’m looking for a possible explanation to a problem I’m having that I might fix myself. On occasion, my car will begin to shift gears roughly. It seems to shift on time but just bangs into gear. This is accompanied by a whiny noise that changes with engine speed. I am able to make it stop by turning off the car for a minute, but eventually the problem will return.”

Halderman: This is not a do-it-yourself project. The harsh shifting could be due to contaminated fluid or a low level of automatic transmission fluid. The whiny noise could indicate that the transmission is low on fluid, but the noise usually indicates that serious (meaning expensive) harm has occurred, such as a worn pump assembly or worn pressure control regulator. Being sure that the fluid is full and/or changing it may or may not correct this concern. If changing the fluid does not correct the situation, I suggest starting to look for alternatives, such as the installation of a used transmission. Here again, the cost may exceed the value of the vehicle so think about purchasing or leasing a new or newer vehicle.

