

rB Me and My Car | Rod Brace

<http://rodbrace.com/article/car>

I'll admit I struggle with the connection between man and car. As young boys we dreamed of our "muscle car" -- the icon of power and the key to attracting girls. Well before the prospect of facial hair or a driver's license, we dreamed, we debated, we declared in victorious boyish bravado -- we would one day own that fantasy car!

"You are what you drive," has become the mantra of most men and a large majority of women. Our vehicle of choice is our status symbol. Ah, the rush of pulling up in front of people we have placed on our "must impress" list in our sporty, glimmering leather-filled statement on wheels. We reek of fabulous car as we slither from luxury to the pavement, stepping proudly as we chirp the alarm alerting all to notice.

Cars are sexy. Cars are status symbols. Cars reflect who we are.

In the world of possessions-equal-purpose -- this is all too true. But in the spiritual world -- all the above statements are sadly mistaken.

Certainly, there is no problem with owning a nice car, provided it doesn't own us. But the desire to be noticed, respected, valued and revered can very easily be transferred to the car we drive. Car dealers know and love this tendency of ours; just look at how they speak to us about their latest offerings. Car ads beckon us to the fantasy world of "car-dom;" a place filled with the thrill of a full-haired, forty-something, well tanned man of distinction gliding purposefully and powerfully through steep mountainous curves. He roars down the road in an air of supremacy -- top down, hair flowing, gorgeous younger female (with unknown relation and intention) seated seductively close by on her leathery perch. Buy the car and that man is you! Now fast forward.

Your out of proportion car lease payment-to-income ratio forces you to rely on credit cards to "keep up with the Jones's" who by the way, are choking in debt. You charge those \$200 sunglasses, a necessary item for driving with the top down, on your sky-high interest rate card to be paid in minimum installments over the next four years - making the glasses an \$800 purchase that eventually blow off your head along with your hair piece, leaving your "trophy rider" horrified as you clip the guard rail trying to catch them both.

Long story short -- you eventually do get your wish of being noticed by your "must impress" friends, all of whom are peering out your office window as the "repo-man" drags the love of your life back to the bank.

May I suggest a new approach? How about (1) Paying cash for a car you can afford, (2) Seeing your vehicle as merely transportation from point "A" to point "B," (3) Placing your worth not in the things you own, but rather in your position as a much loved and cherished "child" of God. When you see yourself and your worth as God does, you will find relief from the pressures and context of popular culture. Then you'll be freed from the desire to

consume and moved to a simplified life genuinely lived in the fast lane.

Excerpt from Simplify by Rod Brace available from your favorite online bookseller.