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Make Lemonaid from a Lemon

By Debra Vaughn

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by: **Debra Vaughn**

About 2 months ago my family grew by one more. When we had our baby, the reality that we could no longer fit our family into a car hit us. Our back seat simply would not fit 2 carseats and a carrier car seat. So off the the dealership we went to buy a mini-van.

After browsing several dealerships in one day. I found two vans that I liked at two different dealerships. Here is how I got a van that is practically brand new, though the year of the van is 1996, for \$8,999.00. The best part about it is, you can do it too!

First, my husband and I went to 3 different dealerships. We found three vans that we loved. at the last dealership, I fell in love with a particular van. The van was marked at \$13,995. I mentioned to the salesperson that there was a van that was practically identical at the dealership right across the street that was priced at only \$9,999. I told my husband that maybe we should just go across the street and see about getting that one. I did this intentionally right in front of the salesman loud enough so that he could hear me. Within two seconds, maybe less, he chimed in with, "Let me talk to my sales manager and see what we can do for you." I agreed. I was expected him to come back with a price that matched the dealership across the street. To my amazement, he came back with a price of \$8,999! That was a full \$5,000 LESS that the original price with NO trade-in and nothing down! We jumped on that offer and signed the contract within 45 minutes. We did insist that they give us a 30 day dealer warranty with no deductible. They agreed.

Being the "savvy shopper" that I am, I immediately drove my new van off the lot and took it to my father, a mechanic. He gave the car a good evalutaion and gave me a list of everything that was wrong with it. On my way home that night, my service engine light came on, six hours after I signed the contract. To say I was upset would be an understatement!

I got up the next morning and purposely got myself all worked up and ready for battle. I waited for one hour after the dealer opened then drove my new van back to the dealership. The trick here is to not

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call ahead of time and go to the dealership at a busy time, usually on the weekends.

One thing that dealers count on you not knowing is that, by law, you have a 72-hour cooling off period to take any major purchase back to where you got it and return it for no reason. So knowing this, I went back. As soon as I pulled into the lot, I was approached by another salesman. His first reaction to me was to ask me how I was. I replied with a simple, "Not good!" He asked what was the matter and I told him and gave him a list of everything that was wrong, including a cupholder being missing. I let him know that no matter how much I liked the van, I was had no reservations about giving it back, after all, I was within my legal limit.

He immediately went back and got the sales manager, I vented to him, in front of other customers. He took back my keys and put my van into the shop immediately to save face in front of the other customers. he gave us a loaner van to use in the mean time.

After two days, I still didn't have my van back, so I called the dealership and told them that unless I could get another 72 hour cooling off period, he could keep my van. I was obviously not going to be stuck with a van that I only had for 6 hours! Needless to say, I got my time extended.

My van was returned to me that day. My cooling off period was extended, I had the 30 dealer warranty and the repairs were made. Curious as to what needed to be fixed? He is the list: the catalytic converter, several sensors, the transmission, the alignment was out, two tires were worn, it needed an oil change, the gas cap was missing and my cup holder was broken. By the time my repairs were done, my \$8,999 van was worth a total of \$15, 127! I got a practically new van after all the work was done! Then 2 days before the dealer warranty was up, I took it back in and got a new belt in the motor. I got a lemon and made lemonade, you can too!

Hint: Check out Carfax.com to see if your vehicle has been in an accident or anything else has been done to it. Most dealerships subscribe to this service so you should get it for free. If they don't subscribe, ask if they have an internet access you can use to check yourself, for free, while at the dealership.

Debra Vaughn is a stay-at-home mother to 3 young girls. She is a freelance writer in her spare time. Debra Vaughn also edits and publishes The Family Budgeteer Bi-Weekly Online, including a FREE E-book and Newsletter which can be found at

Understanding The Lemon Law

By Stephen Kreutzer

Lemon laws were designed to protect the consumer. Buying a vehicle is one of the major purchases a person can make and having protection against a bad deal is important. Lemon laws differ from state to state, but the basics of the law are standard throughout the United States.

The lemon law gives consumers a basic definition of what considers a vehicle to be a lemon. It also

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states the manufacturer is responsible for problems and goes on to define how matters should be handled when a lemon is in question. The lemon laws sets up a warranty period that is usually between 12 and 24 months. It also specifies how many attempts must be made to correct the defect before a refund or replacement is ordered. Most often serious defects that would affect the safety and security of passengers is allowed one attempt to correct. Other lesser concerns usually are allowed three attempts. When the refund is given there are dedications for use of the vehicle. This usually correlates with the number of miles on the vehicle. Not every situation qualifies under the lemon law, so checking state regulations is important before attempting to use the law.

Once you know your situation qualifies under the lemon law there are some steps to take. Repairs are an important part of the lemon law, as stated above, there are a certain number of attempts allowed to try to repair the defect. It is important that you keep good repair records to prove the attempts have been made. After repairs have been attempted you have to notify the manufacturer about what is happening. You should then be set up to get the refund or replacement. Sometimes the manufacturer will disagree and you may have to go to court to resolve the matter.

Lemon laws are a way to make manufacturers responsible for the vehicles they make. When a person buys a vehicle they expect to be able to drive it and use it, not be stuck with major problems. Fortunately more often than not major defects are caught as soon as the vehicle is on the market and the manufacturer steps up to replace them. However, if this doesn't happen then your state's lemon laws are there to look out for your rights.

Stephen Kreutzer is a freelance publisher based in Cupertino, California. He publishes articles and reports in various ezines and provides information on lemon laws at [Lemon Law Facts](#).

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