We are not sure how this solution became known as the Bobby Green Solution. He claims he didn’t develop it but most of us don’t believe him, we think he is just being modest. However, the name has stuck and from now on, henceforth, and forevermore this procedure shall be known as the Bobby Green Solution.

The Problem

To say there is a solution indicates there must be a problem. The problem for which this solution applies is a transmission problem, or more accurately a transmission control problem. The first indication that anything is amiss is when a casual glance at the dash gear indicator shows it to be stuck in the D position – even when parked. Our first reaction is, “OMG, the transmission is going out!” But knowledge is power and if we read the Yahoo Rialta-Tech messages we know this is not a serious problem, and yes, the transmission is just fine.

The Symptoms

The first symptom most of us will notice is the above mentioned dash gear indicator seems to be stuck in D (photo 1). There is a variation of this condition which shows a reverse image (photo 2) but both are caused by the same problem.

The transmission will continue to function normally with one important exception noted below. When pulling out from a dead stop, it will go through all the gears and into D without problems. It will go into park (P) when stopped and reverse when required. However, we will not be able to manually downshift and this feature can be important when faced with a long or steep grade. We can get it to downshift going up a grade by stomping the accelerator but there is no way to downshift going down a grade. There will be no engine braking so we must either ride the brakes or use the runaway truck ramps, neither solution is a good one.

The dreaded Check Engine light will be on and the code reader from our handy-dandy OBD-II reader (or Scangauge) will show fault code P0705 (photo 3). This code translates to Transmission Range Sensor Circuit Malfunction (PRNDL Input).
An interesting side note, resetting (erasing) this code will temporarily get rid of the symptoms (but not the problem). The transmission shifting will act normally for a few engine cycles but the problem is not cured and the symptoms will return.

The Solution

The solution for this problem is pretty simple. It is caused by a poor connection where the shift controller plugs into the transmission. Moisture and microscopic road grime will eventually invade an otherwise well sealed plug. A trip to the local auto parts store will produce a can of electric contact cleaner for a few bucks. There are sprays available that contain protectant to help prevent future oxidation such as DeoxIT. Next step is to drop the belly pan and crawl under the Rialta (sorry). A lift or pit makes this job much easier but is not essential. Locate the plug, it is on the upper rear of the transmission, driver’s side. Getting the wires unplugged from the transmission can be a little difficult but not that bad. Once apart, liberally spray both fittings with the contact cleaner (photo 4), put everything back together and we are done. You may also want to check the connectors in the socket (wire) side to see if a couple of them are spread a bit. We've run into this a few times and have carefully bent them back toward the middle of the plug using a probe or pick so they'll grip the pin on the switch better.

Oh yes, take a moment of reverent silence to pay homage to Bobby Green for making this solution available and widely known throughout our Rialta community.