

Happy Groundhog Day

By Anna Von Reitz



I know someone who was born in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. I need to give him a call and rattle his cage today, just for old times sake, and catch up on the latest groundhog gossip. If you are going to gossip, let it be about something harmless and fun.

I am told that one year the groundhog made an escape and they had to use a stuffed one that kept falling over on camera. I can believe that. Apparently, anything is possible in Punxsutawney. Even being born there.

And of course, there is the iconic Bill Murray movie, Groundhog Day, which has become a cult classic, and my personal favorite --- though I can't quite place it in any genre. It's a comedy-drama-tragedy-religious parable. If you have never seen "Groundhog Day"---- consider watching it as a fitting way to celebrate this oddest major American holiday.

With or without a large bag of popcorn.

The premise of the movie is that time gets stuck, and just keeps replaying this one day --- which happens to be Groundhog Day, over and over and over.... in endless variations.

Our hero, Bill Murray goes through all the stages of grief as he struggles to accept his odd fate of endlessly reliving this same day. He mirrors shock, anger, denial, and finally, acceptance, and from acceptance, rebirth--- and he takes you along for the ride.

He starts out as the typical up-and-coming media shark, trying to bust someone or something on a wooden nickel. He's fast with the put-downs and the cynical banter, arrogant, self-important, grasping, alienated from any higher impulse. It's all about money and power and ego, ego, ego.

But, as he is forced to stop and relive Groundhog Day, out of sheer boredom, he starts to notice the rest of the world around him, and the other people in it. Despite his base beginning, he starts to care. And he starts to develop his own talents in response to caring.

His journey is the same journey we are all on. The fundamental change he undergoes as his ego is chiseled away is a refinement in the Refiner's fire, that we all need to accept--- and when we do, then miracles happen.

Instead of drifting along like a leaf on a flood-tide, we discover how much we have to offer, how much we are needed, what we can choose to be and what we can contribute. Even if, like Bill Murray's character, we start our journey as mean-spirited, selfish, cynical, largely useless

snobs, we can -- if we pay attention to life's lessons, become a far better and far happier version of ourselves.

As an old woman on the other side of the learning curve, it's a Life Review tale. For younger people, it's a glimpse of what's to come, and how they can turn their own lemons into lemonade, one day at time. Even if it's the same day.

I usually watch "Groundhog Day" once a year, yes, on Groundhog Day. This year I'll be away from home, so the tradition will continue without me.

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