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Groundhog Day

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Happy Groundhog Day!

Yes, it's that day of the year where we all celebrate the revered tradition of relying on a rodent to predict if it's going to be an early spring ? or is that a late winter?

Who better to predict the weather than a groundhog?

I guess if you were desperate, you could consult a professional meteorologist, but why would you bother with a scientist who measures temperature, air pressure, wind strength and direction, and uses ground sensors, satellites, and radar, when you can ask a groundhog?

I'm not sure if anyone actually ?celebrates' Groundhog Day. It's more like a morning news report that tells you if Wiarton Willy or Punxsutawney Phil saw their shadow.

However, if Groundhog Day falls on a weekend ? this year, it's a Thursday ? I think a Groundhog Day party would be in order, at least as an excuse to get some friends together, have some drinks and take part in some kind of Groundhog Day shenanigans. I'm not sure what that would include, but it does sound like a lot of fun. Maybe some groundhog-inspired cocktails or a pin-the-tail on the groundhog game? The possibilities are endless for someone who is a talented party planner.

?Phil? Phil Connors!? It's me! Ned! Ned Ryerson!?

If you just read this quote and immediately recognized it, chances are, you are a fan of the movie Groundhog Day.

It is a 1993 film starring Bill Murray, and set in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on Feb. 2.

In the movie, Phil Connors wakes up to the sound of Sonny and Cher singing, ?I got you Babe.' It happens the next day, then the next, and the next.

He finally realizes he is living the same day, over and over and over again.

The movie never explains why he is caught in this time warp, and it doesn't explain why he is the only person who is experiencing it, although everyone else is obviously in the same time loop because they are there every day as well.

Phil Connors is known as a disagreeable and miserable person. He's hard to work with and thinks only of himself.

However, as the movie progresses, he takes a new approach to life. He uses the repetition of starting the same day over and over by doing good deeds, and he starts learning new things.

He becomes an expert in some of his hobbies, including ice sculpting and playing the piano. The idea was that since he had nothing but time on his hands, he could practice every day until he became an expert.

A theory came out a few years ago that in order to become an expert in something, it takes 10,000 hours of practice. According to the theory, anyone can become an expert in a field as long as they put in those required hours.

That is the equivalent of practicing something eight hours per day, five days a week, for almost five full years.

I'm not sure the theory is really correct. Some people have a natural talent for some things, and they could become an expert a lot sooner, while others may continue to struggle, even after completing the required time. It is, after all, a theory, and I'm sure no one has really ever tried it out.

I've known people who were gifted musicians and could sit down with an instrument and play a requested tune by ear after just a few moments of figuring it out. Other people spend years trying to achieve a goal and never quite make it a reality at the level they are striving for.

Practice, it is said, makes perfect. Of course, there is a lot of common sense in that phrase. After all, if you don't practice, you will never get better at something.

A good example is playing the piano. Anyone who plays knows that repetition is the key. You may stumble over the keys the first few times, but every time it becomes easier as your body and muscle memory start to pick up on the right keys you want to play. Before you know it, your fingers automatically go to the right keys when they are supposed to.

If we can really learn something from Groundhog Day, and I don't think we really can, because it's just a ridiculous tradition, at least you can learn something from the movie and practice whatever you want to learn, and stick with it.

By the way ? get ready for six more weeks of winter.