

Groundhog day essay

[Experience](#), [Happiness](#)



The movie, Groundhog Day, can easily be written off as a simple, somewhat farcical film which presents a silly central idea of being stuck in a loop – repeating the same day over and over again. At the start of the film, Bill Murray's character, Phil Connors, is presented as being egocentric and full of his own self-importance but by the end of the film, he has been humbled by the unusual events and finds that it becomes increasingly important to him to win the love of Rita, played by Andie MacDowell. It is easy to follow this progress as the film is presented solely from his point of view. Connors gets a second chance and a third and a fourth and, to begin with, he wastes it through frivolous activity and hedonistic pursuits but he does, eventually, re-evaluate his priorities and begin to re-direct his energy. It is clear that the film presents two messages: the first being that you rarely get a second chance in life and that when you do, you should grab it with both hands, and the second being that true happiness must come from within yourself.

At the beginning of the film, Murray's character is presented as being a particularly unlikable, local TV weatherman with an inflated sense of his own self-importance. Whilst he is on location, Connors gets caught up in a blizzard and so checks into a local bed and breakfast to wait it out. However, when he wakes up the next morning, he finds that he is reliving February 2nd again – groundhog day. Initially, he is confused by this turn of events and, without anyone else aware of what has happened, he bumbles through the first couple of days – repeating his mistakes over and over again.

However, after this has happened a few times over, Connors begins to take advantage of the situation: he begins to abuse the townspeople, he files terrible and cynical reports on the Groundhog Day festivities, and generally

begins to behave like it no longer matters. It culminates when he kidnaps the groundhog at the centre of the festival and drives both it and himself off a cliff and into a quarry, killing himself. He continues to spend the next few days attempting to kill himself.

In short, Connors displays his character's true self by first taking advantage of the situation, failing to behave politely and conscientiously simply because he doesn't have to anymore, and then begins to try and kill himself. He does not bask in this rare opportunity he's been given and thus demonstrates his disregard for the beauty of life. However, as the film progresses, Connors begins to re-evaluate his life and attitude; he decides to pursue the love of Rita and renew his relationships with the people around him. It is this change in his character which most greatly demonstrates the message of the film: Connors begins to recognise that he has been given a wonderful opportunity. A cynic might suggest that he pursues this greater level of selflessness because he realises that he needs to fulfil something to regain his normal life. However, in either scenario, he does set about bettering himself and taking good advantage of the opportunity he's been afforded.

The film is told solely from Connors' point of view and so the audience goes on this moral journey with him. We travel from hedonistic, self-involved, egotist to a selfless and determined man with romance in his heart and tenacity in his desire to improve. The audience bears witness to Connors' slow realisation that true happiness can only come from within oneself and not from the enjoyment of material things. The film borrows ideas from Buddhist beliefs which state that the greatest pursuit a man can undertake is that of achieving true inner happiness and oneness with the world around

him (Upadhyaya 431). Arguably, one of the scenes that we see in the latter half of the movie shows Connors and Rita making snow angels in the park. This simple act, which we associate with childhood, demonstrates that Connors is finally becoming at one with the world around him and is finding real joy in the simplest of activities. He does not need money or material goods because he is lost in the moment with the woman he loves at his side. In conclusion, the film, *Groundhog Day*, presents its audience with two key messages which, ultimately, lead to the same overall idea: take advantage of every opportunity you're given and find inner happiness by, not pursuing the materialism and commercialism of the world, but rather by pursuing the things which genuinely make you feel happy. In Connors' case, this is the discovery of his love of Rita and, in turn, his love of life. His character highlights this central theme and message to the viewer through their shared experiences with Connors, and thus the film presents a deep message to all.

Works Cited

Groundhog Day. Dir. Harold Ramis. Perf. Billy Murray and Andie MacDowell. Columbia Pictures, 1993. Film.

Upadhyaya, Kashi Nath. *Early Buddhism and the Bhagavadgītā*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971. Print.