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# It?s a Canadian thing

by Sheralyn Roman

This week I thought I would tone it down a bit and perhaps talk about something a little less controversial than retail cannabis stores, paramedics, or whether a tax increase is looming. I've chosen instead to talk about the weather. What could be less controversial than weather? As it turns out, everyone has an opinion and weather ? even when it's cold outside ? is actually a pretty ?hot? topic!

Love it or hate it, whether we love or hate the weather (I couldn't resist) is a subject of much debate. A sunny, snowy day is for some, something to look forward to. When you're an avid snowboarder, a skier or can't wait to hear the sound of a skate blade cutting into the ice surface, winter is a veritable playground. Bundling up in ?fashionable? outdoor attire that you had to mortgage the house to purchase and which makes even the thinnest amongst us look like the Stay Puff Marshmallow man is your idea of a good time. If that's you ?fill your boots? as the saying goes and I don't mean with snow. For others (and I must count myself in this latter category) thoughts of spending copious amounts of time outdoors during any kind of weather that starts with ?minus? just makes me want to weep. For the record, when you weep in winter your tears freeze to your face ? it's not pleasant.

What is pleasant? Beautiful, sunny, fall days. The weather is still warm, you don't require a parka, the brilliance of the multi-coloured leaves is stunning and you can still enjoy the last of patio season, albeit sometimes with a heater on. Spring can't be counted upon what with all that rain and summer is pretty wonderful but frankly, some days it's just too damn hot. That leaves fall (another pun intended?it's so easy) as the standout season amongst seasons.

Perhaps you disagree? Maybe summer is your favourite? Or, as a passionate gardener, spring is your thing as you nurture nature, coaxing new life into existence. Well, I think the truly great thing about the weather is that it brings Canadians together. It gives us something to talk, even debate about, with both friends and strangers. Any change in temperature gives rise to conversations in the grocery line, with the drive-thru employee, as we wait in the Doctor's office and even while we are at work. Weather features large on social media too. It is complained about, pictures are taken and posted and whatever the season happens to be, there's always someone who feels the need to remind us it's only ?X? number of days till (insert season here.)

The weather gives us a sense of commonality with one another. Would you initiate a conversation with someone in any of the above noted places, if you didn't have the weather as your introductory topic? Would you help your neighbour carry in the groceries if there weren't 14 inches of snow on the ground? The weather is the ?gateway? subject. It opens the door to conversations you might not otherwise have had. It's been said that Canadians talk about the weather more than any other country in the world. I'd argue this is because we actually have something to talk about. We have four seasons, each with it's own unique set of features. Think how boring it would be if we didn't have the weather to talk about. After all, there's only so much that can be said about either Justin Trudeau or Doug Ford before a fight breaks out. Besides, our weather is anything but boring. In fact, it's often been said, ?If you don't like the weather wait five minutes.? This is especially true in spring and fall ? both seasons where you could quite conceivably leave your home with boots and a parka on, provided you also have some shorts and flip flops in your car for the afternoon when the temperature has soared to a balmy +10!

The bottom line is, I'm ok with these extreme variances in weather because I think it brings out the best in us. It gives us a reason to have a conversation with a stranger. It gives us a reason to help both strangers and neighbours alike AND it gives us something to look forward to ? whether to a change in the seasonal weather or the daily weather ? it's our commonality. It's a Canadian thing.