

 **The Schmooze**
Stories with a Yiddish Twist

**YIDDISH GUIDE TO PHIL ROSENTHAL,
CREATOR OF “EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND”**

by
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Phil Rosenthal is the comedy writer who co-created and ran “Everybody Loves Raymond.” The program ran from 1996 to 2005.

Phil is the host of a new travel show about food (“esnvarg”). Time magazine says that “it’s a nice show where nice people have a nice time, and there’s no need to prove anything, especially not with boiled chicken feet.” The name of the show: “I’ll Have What Phil’s Having,” and might possibly be the funniest travel show on TV.

Rosenthal will travel, making stops in Tokyo, Florence, Hong Kong, Paris, Barcelona and L.A. He says, “I have a mission. What I want to do is get the person who has never traveled off the couch...When you connect with someone from another culture, it’s extra-special.” (Note: The Yiddish words for “couch potato” are “sofe kartofl.”)

In Florence, Phil tried to express his joy after tasting gelato from the machine (“di mashin”). He kissed a woman making it. Later in the episode, after taking a bite of steak (“bifsteyk”) that leaves him equally “verklempf” (overwhelmed with emotion), he kisses the butcher (“katsev”). It’s a show about a very happy man kissing people after eating things.

Shown below is a Yiddish Guide to Phil Rosenthal:

“geboyrn-tog” (birthday)

Rosenthal was born on Jan. 27, 1960.

“tate-mame”

Rosenthal’s parents are Helen and Max Rosenthal.

“televisye” (television)

Rosenthal grew up with *The Honeymooners*, *All in the Family*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *The Odd Couple* and *Taxi*. [Note: They were all character-based sitcoms.] He spent most of his childhood days watching TV. His parents would ask: “What are you going to do, get a job watching television?” It got to the point where his parents said, “Go out and have a drink.”

When Rosenthal was 17, he watched the movie, “*Annie Hall*” and identified with this nebbish who can’t find love and always ruins everything, and knowing that in the end the girl will always pick the handsome (“sheyn”) guy. His mother told him, “You’re not Woody Allen.”

Note: Leo Rosten uses the word “nebekh”/”nebbish” as follows: “Poor thing.” His wife, nebekh, has to put up with him.” And, “Whom did she marry? A real nebekh!”

“universitet”/”kaledzh” (college)

Phil graduated from Hofstra University in 1981.

“schmuck” - obscene as all get-out.

Leo Rosten says, “Never use schmuck before women, children or strangers.” An agent saw Phil in a play in New York and told him, “If you come to L.A., you’ll never stop working as an actor.” Phil packed his bags.

“Like a schmuck, I moved to L.A., and I never started working as an actor.”

“Noo Yawk” (New York)

Phil wanted “*Everybody Loves Raymond*” to be set in Queens. He didn’t want the city. He compromised, and the set took place on Long Island.

Phil said that there were a couple of rules on the show. The main one is “Could this happen?” “You want to stretch credibility as far as you can without destroying the reality or the thing that people relate to when they watch.” Rosenthal and Ray Romano made decisions regarding the show.

“der parshoyn” (character in a play)

Phil says that “*Everybody Loves Raymond*” is a character-driven sitcom, as opposed to a joke-driven sitcom.”

“fusbal” (football)

Phil said that his program (“*Everybody Loves Raymond*”) beat Monday Night Football every week. “I tell people we’re trying to be the Bruce Springsteen of sitcoms.” (quote)

“foiler; foilyak” (lazy man)

“I’m the world’s laziest workaholic...We start...just by talking about what happened at home and what’s going on and what movies we saw and someone (“emetser”) will say something really funny, and suddenly that’s a story...Talking, talking, talking and then all of a sudden, that’s a story.” (quote) Source: “The Lunch Bunch Food’s Just One Reason Everybody Loves Writing for ‘raymond’ by Ellen Gray, philly.com, 10/12/98

“froy” (wife)

Rosenthal’s wife, actress Monica Horan, played the role of Amy MacDougall-Barone, the off and on girlfriend (wife after season 7) of Robert Barone.

“mishpoche” (family)

“I think I speak for both of us [Ray Romano and himself] when I say that everything on this show [Everybody Loves Raymond] including all the success (“hatslokhe”) we’ve had--can be directly attributed to our families.”

“Everybody either saw a member of their family or themselves (“zikh”) [in “Everybody Loves Raymond”]. You laugh because it’s funny, and you cry because it’s true.” (quote by Rosenthal)

“schlemiel” - a bungling fool

“...but I would agree that Debra is an Every wife who’s had to put up with a schlemiel for a husband.” (quote)

“frukht” (fruit)

Phil recalls the time he signed his mother up for the Fruit-of-the-Month Club. No, she wasn’t grateful (“dankbar”), she was horrified. She said, “I’m always afraid of things spoiling. There’s so much fruit” (Note: That experience led to an episode in Season 1, Sept. 13, 1996, where Ray has to defend his “Fruit-of-the-Month” gift to Marie and Frank.

Here’s how he shared the fruit story in his book, “You’re Lucky You’re Funny: How Life Becomes a Sitcom”:

When I first started to make a little money in Hollywood, I bought my mom, for Hanukkah, a gift of the Fruit-of-the-Month Club. And then came the phone call from my mother in Rockland County, New York:

“Philip, we got the pairs.”

“Oh, that’s good, Ma. You like them?”

“Yes, they’re very nice, but please...it’s an entire box of pears. There must be twelve or fourteen pears here. There’re so many pears. Please, Philip, do me a favor. Don’t ever send us any more food again, okay?”

I said, “Well, Ma...another box is coming next month.”

She said, “What? More pears?”

I said, “No, Ma, a different fruit every month.”

“EVERY MONTH? My God, Max, he got us in some kind of cult. What am I supposed to do with all this fruit?”

“I don’t know,” I told her. “Most people like it. You eat it...You share it with your friends.” “Which friends?”

“I don’t know...Lee and Stan.”

“Lee and Stan buy their own fruit.”

“Oh, my God, Ma...”

“Why did you do this to me?”

“What is happening?”

“I can’t talk anymore, there’s too much fruit in the house.”

“shrayber” (writer)

“90% of what you see on that show [“Everybody Loves Raymond”] happened to me or to Ray or to one of the other writers.” (quote)

“gebitn” (changed)

“Things have changed since ‘Raymond.’ I doubt that ‘Raymond’ would get on the air today. It’s a different world and that’s fine. Everything evolves. Everything changes. I have changed, too.” (quote)

“dingen” (to hire)

When Phil and Ray were looking to cast someone for the role of Marie, (Doris Roberts), they saw about 100 women. Nobody came close to Doris Roberts; she hit it out of the park. Who can forget the episode about plastic covers on the sofa. This was a common thing in Italian households. Plastic-covered furniture, sofas that have never breathed freely, towels you can’t touch, china no one is ever going to use.

Doris is a combination of two mothers--Phil’s mother is a German Jew and Ray’s mother is Italian-American.

“religye” (religion)

Rosenthal grew up in a Conservative household. He had a bar mitzvah, but “vowed never to set food in a temple again.” Someone he managed to find his way back. He married Monica Horan in 1990, who converted to Judaism. They sent their two

children to a Jewish day school. His wife won the Tree of Life Award from the Jewish National Fund.

“graditsye” (tradition)

“bal-tsdoke” (philanthropist)

The Rosenthal’s philanthropy was heavily influenced by their relationship with Philip’s parents and late grandmother (“bobe”). Despite fleeing Nazi Germany and surviving the Holocaust, they were committed to building productive lives and pass their traditions on to their children. The Rosenthal’s teach their children, Ben and Lily, the importance of giving to their community (“tsibur”) and making the world a better place for those who cannot do for themselves. Monica sums it up with a well-known verse: “To whom much is given, much is expected.”

Source: The Flourish Foundation

“gliklekh” (happy)

Rosenthal says, “It’s very easy keeping people happy. Being Jewish, I know that food is the most important (“vikhtik”) thing and we always have great food on the set [Everybody Loves Raymond]...”

Lunch was an event for the writers of Raymond--an eclectic group of sitcom veterans, rookies, ex-actors, and one former Ringing Bros. clown. Once a week Rosenthal took his staff to a Japanese restaurant whose name he’s reluctant to reveal. Once a year, he flies in stone crabs from Florida.

“shnel esnvarg” (fast food)

Phil Rosenthal hasn’t passed beneath the Golden Arches in more than 30 (“draysik”) years...”I’m not going there. It is not very good for you to eat that. There has got to be a better way. We need to change things in the world. What is sadder than going to Italy and seeing a McDonald’s? Come on! What are we doing?” (quote)

Source: “TV Page.com, ‘Raymond’ Creator Phil Rosenthal: Don’t Eat At McDonald’s, Sean Daly, Oct. 1, 2015.

FYI: McDonald’s USA says that 26 of its fast-food restaurants can be found in the U.S. on HOSPITAL CAMPUSES. Corporate Accountability Int’l (CAI) sent a letter to 22 hospitals with a McDonald’s on their campuses urging them to sever ties with the Golden Arches.

Amanda Froelich says, “We’re not kidding. After you recover from your open heart surgery you can go downstairs to the in-hospital McDonald’s and get yourself a double cheeseburger, large Coke, and fries.” Some of these french-frying joints have contracts that require them to give a certain percentage of their profits to their

hospitals. So, the more unhealthy food the restaurant sells to patients, family members and visitors, the richer the hospital gets.”

“nokhmakhn” (to imitate)

[on the future of television], “It’s all cyclical, and all these reality shows will start dropping off, and then the next sitcom will come along, and then they’ll say, ‘Wait a minute! The hit is over here now! Run over there and start imitating that!’” (quote)

“durkhfaln” (flop or failure)

Rosenthal did a sitcom pilot last year for ABC loosely based on the life of “Happy Days” star, Henry Winkler, but it never made it to air.

“mekhaber” (author)

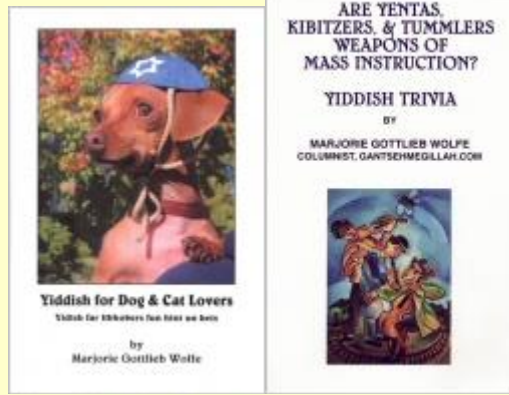
Rosenthal wrote and directed a documentary film for Sony Pictures called “Exporting Raymond.” It depicts his efforts to adapt Everybody Loves Raymond for Russian TV, despite little knowledge of Russian culture.

Sources: “The New Joys of Yiddish” by Leo Rosten
“Everybody Loves Raymond - Our Family Album” by
Ray Romano & Phil Rosenthal
“The Jewish News Weekly of Northern California,
Everybody loves Rosenthal by Curt Schieier
Time Magazine, Oct. 12, 2015

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two books:**



"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and
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