

The Schmooze Stories with a Yiddish Twist

VER-KLEMP*^T

"VER-KLEMP"/"VERKLEMP*" is a Yiddish word that means "overcome with emotion. It's pronounced "fer-klemp*."

by
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1990s "Verklemp*" was made popular by Canadian actor and comedian Mike Myers on the late-night sketch-comedy show, Saturday Night Live (SNL). Myers played the role of Linda Richman in a sketch called Coffee Talk. Myers-as-Richman was a stereotypical Jewish woman living in New York. She wore gaudy clothing ("klayder"), big hair ("groys hor"), and long painted (fake) fingernails. She was obsessed with Barbra Streisand, her New York accent ("aktsent"), and throwing Yiddish words into her speech.

Myers-as-Rickman would place her hand on her chest ("brustkastn") and say, "I'm all verklemp*!" This would be followed by the phrase "Talk amongst yourselves." Myer's character, Linda, was a spoof of his actual mother-in-law ("shviger").
(Source: WackyWordWednesday)

Some examples: "Okay, I got verklemp* when Michael Strahan announced his exit from Live With Kelly and Michael just moments before the April

19 program.”

“I’m so verklempt that Emma and Noah are the top baby names in the U. S...and that the girls’ name Isis dropped completely off the list.”

“I’m so verklempt that my grandson thought ‘naches’ was a corn chip.”

2010 Barbra Streisand came to Philadelphia for a Nov. 13 gala, marking the opening of the new National Museum of American Jewish History on Philadelphia’s Independence Mall. The songstress was among the 18 Jews selected for the museum’s “Only in America” hall of fame. She smiled, along with Jerry Seinfeld and Bette Midler, to the 1,500 plus celebrating donors.

Streisand launched into a Parody of “People”:

People/I’m here with people/the most heymishe people in the world...

2016 The headline read:

SHE’S HERE. BARBRA STREISAND RETURNS TO THE TONYs STAGE AFTER 46 YEARS: “YOU’RE MAKING ME VERKLEMPPT.”
(Source: People)

Streisand, 76 closed the Tony Awards and pre-seated the final award of the night for best musical to Hamilton. She said, with a haimish ponem (friendly face), “Thank you, thank you! You’re making me verklempt,” she joked to the audience.

Celebrities and non-celebrities use the word when they are so emotional that they’re on the verge of tears, choked up, speechless, unable to express one’s feelings/emotions. Note: The Yiddish word meaning “to weep” is “veynen.”

MARJORIE WOLFE was “verklemt” when she read the following headline from the New York Post, 6/15/16:

ZABAR’S ‘SHOOTER’ LOXED UP.

A man went into Zabar’s for a bagel and a schmear, and then attempted to rob the store.

And then there’s the Dear Diary letter from Ira Feuerlicht to the New York Times:

Dear Diary:

Scene: Zabar’s, recent afternoon.

Counterman, calling out numbers: “21, 22?”

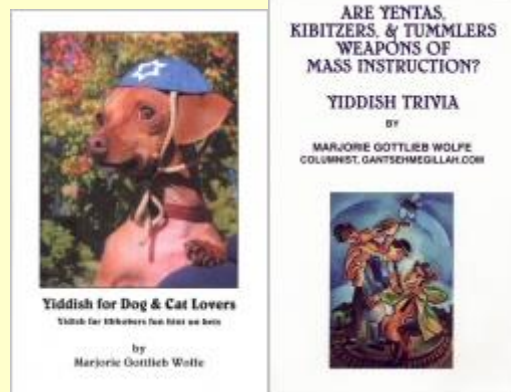
Fortyish woman, waving her number: “Here!”

Counterman: “Are you 21?”

Woman: “I was, once.....”

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Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books:



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