How to Greet a Dog (and What to Avoid)

Appropriate greetings are common sense. Imagine if someone greeted you the way many people greet dogs!

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<th>Human to Human</th>
<th>Human to Dog</th>
<th>Human to Dog</th>
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- Avoid reaching into their safety zone.
- Avoid rushing up.
- Avoid interactions without asking.
- Avoid staring at people. This is scary.
- Avoid looming over.
- Avoid reaching into personal space.
- Avoid close interaction if the person is afraid of you.
- Avoid touching inappropriately.

- Avoid reaching in or towards the dog’s car.
- Avoid rushing up.
- Avoid interacting with unfamiliar dogs, especially if they’re tied up.
- Avoid staring at or approaching head-on.
- Avoid leaning over or towards dogs even when you change position to squat or get up.
- Avoid reaching your hand out for the dog to sniff.
- Avoid petting if the dog looks nervous or tense. Just admire him instead.
- Avoid hugging, kissing, and patting roughly. This is too familiar and disliked by many dogs.

- Stand a safe distance away so that you are not a threat.
- Approach slowly (at a relaxed walk).
- Ask if you can interact first.
- Approach sideways and look using your peripheral vision.
- Stay outside the dog’s bubble and present your side to the dog.
- Let the dog approach at his own rate.
- It’s OK to pet the dog if he looks relaxed, comes up to you, and solicits your attention by rubbing against you.
- Pet gently.

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