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## Polite Canine Greetings

You will enjoy your dog and take your dog out more if he knows how to be polite. Others will enjoy your dog more too, and you might even win over people who are leery of dogs. The following are canine good citizen skills I teach in my intermediate class. If you have a dog with good basic training skills, you can teach your dog these greeting skills on your own. Do not work on these if your dog is aggressive towards strange dogs or people. See a trainer first so you can resolve the aggression issue.

1. **Approach of a friendly stranger** -- put your dog in a sit/stay at your side. Have a friend or family member approach you and your dog and get close enough to greet you with a handshake. Your dog's job is to be calm in a sit/stay during the approach. If your dog gets up while your friend is approaching, have that person stop or even walk backwards, until you can get your dog back into a sit/stay. Then try again. Your dog is learning that the friendly person approaches when I am calm, but they don't when I try move towards them. Reward your dog when they remain in a sit during the handshake.
2. **Sitting Politely for Petting** -- Repeat as above, but this time the person approaches your dog and pets him/her. Your dog is learning to sit politely for petting. Again, if your dog gets up out of the sit/stay, then have the person stop the petting and move away. Repeat again once your dog is back in a sit/stay.
3. **Passing other dogs** -- Your dog should learn that getting to meet and greet other dogs is your decision not theirs, and when they meet a new dog they should be calm and polite. Many dog fights start because of rude and over-exuberant greetings. Recruit a person with a dog to help you. If your dog is one of these over exuberant dogs, it may be best to recruit someone with a calmer dog than yours. Start about 30 feet apart. With both dogs on the owner's left side, slowly walk towards one another, while making sure that your dogs have their attention on you, not the other dog. When the two of you meet, put your dogs in a sit on your side, shake hands with your friend, and then continue walking until you pass one another. After doing this a few times with your dogs paying attention to you, you can now approach and let the dogs greet. If either dog is dragging and pulling to the other dog, you should stop and put your dogs in a sit. They must learn that you don't approach if they are not calm and paying attention to you. If your dog is pulling you over to your friend's dog at any time, back up a few feet and start again. Have training treats on you, and when your dog is paying

attention to you during the approach and greeting, reward them with a tasty treat. When they are not paying attention to you, or are dragging you, stop and put them in a sit.

In another article, I discuss trail etiquette skills, and the above skills help build the foundation for teaching good trail manners when your dog is off leash.

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