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Page 1

Personal Greeting Boundaries

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What's this Activity About?

This is a Question and Answer Activity that will lead you to think about (initial and ongoing) greeting gestures. Whether you are young, or quite mature, we all greet others upon first meeting. Greeting another is a common occurrence—something we take for granted. However, have you ever experienced discomfort when another person wants to handle your first contact differently? Perhaps it's their custom to hug you. And perhaps, you are uncomfortable about physical contact when being greeted.

This guidebook will help you examine yours—and others'—greeting gestures. And, if necessary, help you to change your habits and behaviors when greeting another.

Activity Objectives

Let's look at what is in this book. This question and answer activity is designed to:

1. Bring awareness to your greeting behaviors.
2. Help you build confidence when greeting others.
3. Questions will help assess your personal comfort level when greeting others for the first time, or thereafter.
4. Offer helpful suggestions and ideas for sharing a greeting.
5. Help you to become aware and mindful of personal boundaries concerning physical contact during greeting.
6. Assure you will respect others behaviors, comfort, and desires during the greeting situation.
7. Enable you to define and set your preferred personal greeting behaviors in any situation.



Who Taught You How to Greet Others?

Greeting another person may (or may not) be something you were taught to do. Proper greeting etiquette and customs have been established in families—or in cultures. Greeting a new person, a guest, a long time friend or family member may come perfectly natural to some, but be very awkward for others.

In some cultures it is customary to offer a kissing gesture on both sides of the cheek, to acknowledge someone. Many youngsters in America greet each other with a High 5 hand slap. Business peers typically always meet and greet with a handshake. Close friends and family often hug.

This exercise is designed to bring awareness to greeting customs and behaviors. This simple, but important communication skill sets the stage for all future interactions with another human being. At the end of this exercise you will gain appreciation and respect for yours—and others greeting styles. Let's begin!

#1 Where did you learn your greeting behaviors? Check all that apply. Then circle one mentor that influenced how you greet others the most.

- My parents and/or grandparents.
- It is the custom of our culture.
- No one taught me. I just mimicked what I saw.
- My friendships taught me.
- Other-Please be specific: _____

#2 What greeting behavior(s) have you adopted and use most often? There are many greeting behaviors, just name your most frequently used .

This question is to help you understand how you developed your habits. There is no right or wrong answer to any of these questions. They are offered to help you learn and discover what is right for YOU.

What are your Personal Greeting Preferences?

#3 What is your preferred greeting? One you give to someone you met and do NOT know. Check off all that apply. Then circle the one that applies most often.

- A handshake
- A High-5
- A hug
- A verbal greeting only; no body
- A kiss on the cheek
- A head nod
- Specify and explain a greeting custom: _____

Sample

Acknowledge Your Comfort Zone

#6 What is your personal comfort zone when greeting someone? Check one!

- No contact at all
- Some contact
- Depends on who I am greeting

#7 How do YOU communicate your greeting boundaries to others upon FIRST meeting them? Check off all that apply and then circle the one habit that happens most frequently when you greet someone.

- I verbally tell others upfront what I want.
- I take the lead and start the greeting (such as a handshake).
- I wait for the other person to connect and I follow their lead.
- I don't think about it. I just let the greeting happen naturally.
- I stop and evaluate how to acknowledge first, before greeting another.
- Sometimes explain YOUR greeting behavior: _____

Communicate your Intentions!

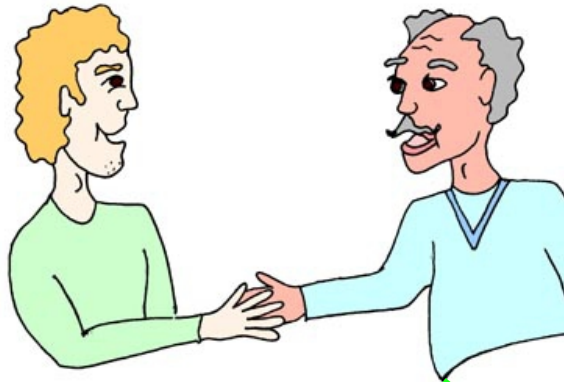
#10 How do you want to communicate future greeting messages to another? Or have them react to you? What feels best for your comfort level?

Let's make a list of behaviors that you may (or may not) want to use in the future. While words convey 10% of your intention; body language is 90%. A behavior gesture that conveys your personal desires loudly.

Often we need to look, listen and take cues from other people when learning how to respond to them appropriately. Sharing a greeting with another person takes practice. And, each new person you will meet will give you another way to be greeted. So enjoy this communication learning experience. And, remember first impressions are lasting!

Check off all behaviors that appeal to your comfort level and good sense when greeting another.

- Say upfront without a smile: "I am happy to meet you! Please respect my personal space- and don't touch me." (You can also be very specific and say "Please, don't hug me.")
- Say: "I am happy to meet you," with a smile; no other gesture offered.
- Only a slight nod. Do not extend your hands or arms for contact.
- Say a simple friendly "Hello" then redirect the greeting right into a positive conversation which can be an inquiry such as: "So tell me about your latest adventures." or "Did you get a chance to go on your trip?" (Or whatever event you both may have talked about last time you met.)



Great Greeting Etiquette

There are so many unique and special ways to greet another person. Generally if you are comfortable, confident and relaxed, most any friendly greeting is appropriate. Here are some proactive gestures that will put another at ease.

- Have direct eye contact when greeting. This shows sincere interest for the person you are greeting.
- If you initiate body contact, a firm handshake as you look into their eyes builds trust. Often greet with "I am happy to meet you!"
- Be sincere in your verbal greeting. When you are first getting acquainted with a newcomer, it is best to leave the jokes for another time.

People appreciate that you care and honor your feelings. When you are honest, others know explicitly that your desires are important to you. Do not worry about hurting someone's feelings, how they chose to react is their choice. You are only responsible for how you conduct yourself. You can be very direct— *and kind*.

Adding in words such as "Please" - "Thank you" - "I appreciate you": All enable a comfortable environment and respond to others accordingly. Here are some samples that get the point across in a nice manner. Always use a cheerful voice!

- No Hugs today, Please!
- Thanks, but I am not a hugging type of person.
- I'd appreciate no contact.

Other Greeting Applications

Personal Boundaries for Greetings can also apply for showing:

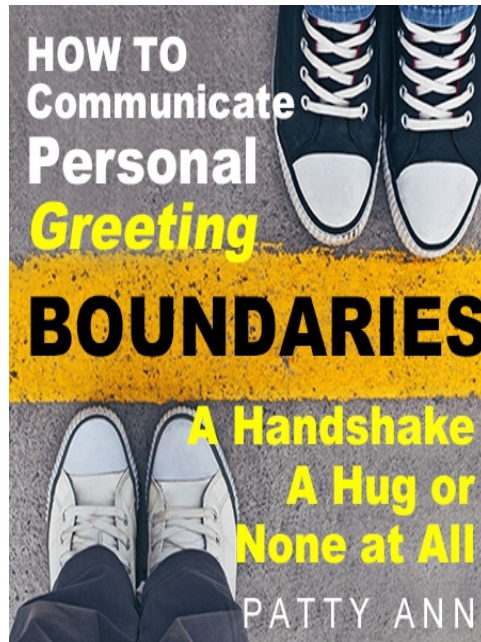
- Acknowledgment (For a Birthday or Anniversary)
- Happiness for Another (An Engagement or Honor Received)
- Displaying Gratitude or Appreciation (For What Someone Did)
- Revealing Affection (Not Necessarily Romantic—Just Affectionate)
- Honoring Someone (Their Contributions or Works)



Remember!

A greeting is not just for appearances. Greetings are an important expression for establishing a strong connection, and gives a lasting impression. By acknowledging another person you are declaring they are worthy of respect—and that you are a confident, caring recipient that deserves their respect in return.

Thank you for Previewing



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Page 10

Personal Greeting Boundaries

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