

🐾 **Daily Doga *Inspirations for you and your dog***

Ground and Greet

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If you won the lottery today, how would you react? How about if you hadn't seen a favorite family member or friend for quite awhile? What if you have been working hard on a project - completed, and finally have time to chill (ah-ha, glass of wine, dark chocolate, soaking in a tub listening to Andrea Bocelli's *Passione*, pretending he's washing your back while singing). The perk, he's blind so can't see your muffin top, sagging boobs, cellulite, bulges or scars. *Imagine anything that gets you excited and/or melting into relaxation.*

Dogs do this too - naturally. We can go out or let them out, and in 20-minutes come home, or call them into the house. What's the greeting like? Our dogs act like they haven't seen us for 3 months. That's why we love dogs. Dogs that have respectful and trusting relationships with us will greet us with glee, happy no matter what.

Dog-go-dog, observe how normal dogs greet one another. They hold back (hey, who are you), or dive in (I'm boss dog or haven't a clue), sniff (have we met before), circle, sniff (okay, got your cell number). Then, the interaction / energy either escalates or not depending on the dogs. Some dogs spend so much time with a human that seeing another dog is like us in that tub - Woofee! If a dog has opportunities to safely navigate their way with other dogs, all is well. If not, growling may escalate, jumping, grabbing, or worse biting too hard. It is a learning experience.

Energy and match matter! YaYaBa – In [Pet Assisted Therapy](#) we have a mantra, “You are your animal’s best advocate.” In [Awareness Centered Training – ACT](#), I woof about watching, guiding and balancing interactions dog-to-dog, children-to-dogs and dogs-to-dogs (can be unpredictable).

Now, back to the beginning and imagine how you interact in exciting situations. Can you bring your twisted, flying self down to the ground, breathing in nose-to-navel - and relax? Depends on the level of excitement doesn't it? And, past experiences (trauma, pleasure), stress levels and energy hormones (flight or fight response).

Same for dogs. Before launching, dogs can learn to “ground”, (sit or stand, paws landed), then greet. If the environment is unpredictable (dog park, walks, visitors), take the initiative to calmly redirect, turn around, and ground our dogs (watch me, sit) before unhooking the leash (if at all). Any dog, whether 2 lbs or 180 lbs, should learn this. This includes my Newfie, who at 120lbs has taught me everything I know about loving greetings, some of them ass over teakettle. I take responsibility for my half of the excitement. We share commonalities; I like warm greetings, but have to realize that others may not. We work together, *grounding ourselves* before greeting, even if that means saying, “Wait a minute, we need to calm down, and then you can meet her.”

Just as we get excited, then relax, or panic and then breathe ourselves out of it, dogs can too with our guidance. First, teach relaxation, whenever your dog is calm. Then teach calming, once they get the concept of “Relax”, but from an incrementally more exciting energy level. Challenge your way up to the point that you know you can say, “Okay, enough, relax please”, and they will. For reward, let them go a little crazy, eat their dinner, sniff, or jump around a bit, but target their jumping away from you, and at something safe, like getting a ball (a task).

Integrative daily training is empowering and powerful - [Awareness Centered Training – ACT now.](#)
Enjoy the Journey ... living and learning with dogs ... breathing in nose-to-navel ... ah-ha!