



Say Hello 1-2-3

This is adapted from Suzanne Clothier's 'Say Hello 1-2-3' relationship-centered training (RCT) technique.

There are 2 versions: one for meeting people, another for meeting dogs

It is great for teaching dog's self-control as well as introducing them to the principle of being given 'permission' (i.e. a clear signal being given before meeting a dog "Go say hi"). Although the technique may not be followed through by adopters, it is a great habit to instil.

All dogs should be shown the engagement "call out" step (Step 1), which is the same for the dog-person and the dog-dog versions. This technique should be taught on-lead and only progressed to off lead once the dog is 100% reliable when an appealing alternative is present (not every dog may make it to the off lead stage!)

Step 1: Building engagement

This teaches the dog to turn quickly towards you for high value rewards. Aim for 20 repetitions per day and 5 repetitions per session. Each instance of the dog turning around to face you should earn him/her 2-3 treats*.

1. Have the dog on lead and walk together
2. Wait until the dog is moving in the same direction as you but his/her attention is somewhere else
3. Step towards the dog, say his/her name in a light positive voice and either clap your hands or tap his/her shoulder** lightly and then back away
4. As the dog turns and faces towards you, praise generously and give the dog 2-3 treats
5. Repeat 4 more times and end the session
6. Only progress to dog-dog or dog-human sessions once the dog is turning reliably

**For dogs that are not responsive to treats, try toys or praise. If neither work, it is likely the dog is too anxious/fearful/aroused to be able to learn effectively (not in the think and learn zone!)*

*** Modify this based on the dog, if they are lacking in confidence, a light leg tap or whistle may be a better option*

The dog-dog version

1. Have 2 dogs separated by at least 5m, both on leash and with a handler
2. Handlers say "Go say hi" (a hand signal is helpful here) and step with their dogs moving towards each other. Avoid tight leashes here



3. Handlers count 1, 2, 3 and on 3 step into their dog's peripheral vision and uses the same technique from Building engagement. A food lure at the dog's nose can be used if necessary
4. If the dog is able to turn away from the other dog- reward generously! If not, practice turning dogs when they are further away from each other
5. Repeat as needed to increase reliability, aiming for the dogs to be allowed to sniff each other and then be easily called away after 3 seconds
6. If aggressive or defensive behavior is seen on the second repetition, no further repetitions are needed. These dogs are unlikely unsuitable to be paired together.

The dog-human version

For dogs that are conflicted, avoidant or have had limited exposure to humans (most), this should be done with a seated target person at first.

1. Have the dog on lead with the target person at least 5m away
2. Handler walks dog towards seated person and says "Go say hi". Avoid tight leashes
3. At a pre-determined distance (1m away is a good starting point), the handler steps into their dog's peripheral vision and uses the same technique from Building engagement (call dog's name and back away). Use a food lure at the dog's nose if necessary
4. Reward the dog generously for turning away. If he/she didn't turn away from a greater distance
5. Once the dog is performing the turn behavior reliably, this can be repeated with a more exciting target person (e.g. standing person, excitable person, person waving their arms, a person who pats a lot, etc)

There are several variations of this to try to prepare the dog for meetings with all kinds of people. Generally speaking a typical progression would be sitting person → sitting excitable person → quiet standing person → excitable standing person → standing person who reaches towards dog etc etc

Remember the following for all versions of Go say Hi 1-2-3

- Never move to the harder step until the dog is completely reliable with the easier step
- Give the dog time to acknowledge or process the target dog/person, don't lure them away before they have a chance to SEE the target
- Pressure on the lead is sometimes unavoidable. However, we want to aim to get the dog to turn around WITHOUT having to pull on the lead. That is the true sign that the dog has 'got it'.