

# "I'm Really Good With Dogs!"

*Managing "Stranger-Danger" in Dogs*





## How Do You Handle Strangers Wanting To Pet Your Dog?

You're walking with your (leash-reactive) dog and feeling pretty darn pleased because so far it's been peaceful.

Suddenly, a 'really friendly' person approaches and asks "can I pet your dog?" with their hand outstretched.

Your dog freezes, as do you. You tighten up on the leash and you manage to splutter "he's not friendly!" and you hear the dreaded words:

**"Dogs LOVE me!"**

## Focus On Your Dog

We are polite! Too polite. We often get involved in the conversation before we tend to our dog's needs.

Call your dog and step back a few steps with some food in your hand to help your dog turn away from the stranger and get some space.

Everybody thinks they're "great with dogs" and that all dogs love them.

People mean well and are genuinely interested in your dog. It's easy for us to react in anger but remember that it's coming from a good place.





## Stop Sign

Once your dog is turned around and focused on food, put a hand up and give your answer.

Drop food on the ground at your feet to keep your dog disengaged if you need to.

## What's Your Script?

Have your words prepared so that you're not stumbling to find the right thing to say while trying to be polite.

No - she's a new rescue!

No thanks!

No - we're late for an appointment!

This isn't my dog.

No - he's afraid of strangers!

No inglaise!

No - we're busy training.

No - she's in pain!

No - he's not feeling well!



## Skip the Conversation

The discomfort lasts all of 3-7 seconds and then you AND the stranger move on with your life, unaffected.

Say your (short) piece and then get yourself and your dog out of there quickly as you can.

The other person's feelings are not your responsibility, nor is the educational aspect.

## Focus on YOUR Dog

It's stressful for **both** of you, but you need to help your dog recover.

Get some distance and when it's safe, do something fun with your dog to lighten the mood.

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