

I am a Greeting  
An interactive poem  
by Jesse Todd

I am a Greeting

I am a sign of acknowledgment. A gesture of recognition and connection. I am as unique and diverse as all of you different people. I am consistent and always changing. I am a tradition – an expectation. I am alive every time you meet someone. I am for new acquaintances, old friends and everyone in between.

I am a Handshake

I am masculine – maybe machismo. I am intimidatingly intimate. I am a comparison of strength – posturing. I am too firm – aggressive/chauvinistic. Or I am too weak – insecure/uncertain – not to be taken seriously. I am sweaty, dry, clammy, dirty, sticky, slimy, freezing, rough – expecting too much.

I am a Wave

I am an attempt at attention. I am juvenile, young – dare I say cute? I seem desperate and I am not always noticed. I am distant. I am secretive. Or wholly open. I seem to be meant for anyone. I often confuse. I'm queer.

I am a Fist Bump

I'm chill! When compared to a handshake. I'm less awkward but still forced. I'm casual – a brief tap. I'm appropriated. I'm covid friendly. I'm manageable. I'm hip.

I am a Nod

I'm acceptable and easy. Little effort – little gesture. I'm hands-free. Touch free. Keeping a distance. Some what impersonal, condescending – or just appropriately, safely, separated.

I am Elbows...?

I'll just leave it at that.

I am a Peace Sign

I'm projecting, suggesting. Turn me around and I might be telling you to f-off. I'm a hippie. I'm grungy. I'm old school. I'm quick – I stick. I'm a quite casual counter-culture.

I am a Kiss

One, two, or three if you're feeling it. I'm too close for comfort. I'm a peck or a smooch. I'm too dry or too wet. Too eager or too shy. Feigned, forced or forceful – fun – freaky – friendly – none the less.

I am a Hug

I am all encompassing. Surrounding. Blanketing. I'm embracing you – did you need it? I'm warm or cold. I'm brief or too long. One handed or full-bodied. Strong and tight. I'm close but distanced. I'm heart beats meeting. I'm squeezing the meanness out. I'm holding every(one)thing together. I'm hard to escape/release. I'm afraid if I let go too soon I'll seem cruel or insincere. Can we let go yet?

I am a Wai

I am a solemn gesture. I'm like a prayer – a wish – a reflection of peace. I am acknowledging everyone present. I'm personal but also keeping a safe space. I'm not forcing contact but maintaining connection. I'm instinctual – when you start using me it just come naturally. I'm creating an energy flow. I'm preserving a tradition. A rhythm – a cyclical motion. Together – wholly – then apart.