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## Finding a replacement for the handshake

### The handshake is dead -- line up the alternatives

By Joan Morris  
Contra Costa Times

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Please bow your heads in recognition of the passing of the ancient and venerable handshake.

In frail health for years and often seen only at formal occasions or when thanking bank managers for loans, the old grip-and-grin guru finally succumbed earlier this month when the president of the United States was photographed doing a chest bump, and a possible future president exchanged a dap with his wife.

It was the final blow to a tradition that has been on the wane since the advent of the leisure suit. But while expected, it nevertheless came about in such a surprising way that we're still reeling and considering what will step into the breach.

Let's take a look at the possibilities.

### The dap

**Origins:** The "dap," also known as the fist bump, seems to have been born in the muddy battlefields of the Vietnam War. The original version includes lots of other movements, but time has distilled the dap to a vertical or horizontal fist bump.

**What it means:** Patti Wood, an Atlanta body language expert and author of "Success Signals," says the dap conveys a sense of determination and

power. After reviewing images of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama exchanging a dap with his wife after learning he had enough delegates to claim the nomination, Wood thought their dap conveyed a sense of being ready to conquer, and that they were unified in their quest.

**Step by step:** Raise your hand as if making a traditional handshake, but curl your fingers into a fist. Keeping the arm parallel to the floor, little finger down, thumb on top, extend your fist from about chest level and gently tap the other person's fist. For a horizontal dap, simply rotate your fist 90 degrees so that the curled fingers are facing the ground. Repeat the bump.

**Who's doing it:** Barack Obama, Howie Mandel, half of Congress

**Inherent dangers:** The participants need to be clear on whether they are doing a dap or a high-five, otherwise a certain awkwardness arises. You also run the risk of injury from jewelry and overenthusiastic dapping.

**Coolness rating:** Five of five, but with a potential of great decline now that its becoming mainstream.

### The chest bump

**Origins:** Unknown, but most likely originated in professional sports. It gained in popularity in the 1990s.

**What it means:** Wood says the symbolism of the chest bump is one of vulnerability and elation. The chest bumpers throw their arms back. Their hands are open, revealing they have no weapons. And they expose their chests and hearts, indicating they are vulnerable, joyful and nonthreatening. For men — and most chest bumpers are male — the move says "I want to be close, but I'm not feminine."

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**Step by step:** Approach your chest-bumping partner, pull your shoulders back and extend your arms, palms open, to the side. Jump forward and bump the chest of your partner.

**Who's doing it:** President Bush, most professional athletes (who prefer the modified hip bump), tipsy guys in bars

**Inherent dangers:** This move has a huge potential for making you look stupid. Wood cites the Bush Bump as an example of a bump gone slightly wrong. The president, who instigated the bump during a graduation ceremony at the U.S. Air Force Academy, does not appear at ease with the move. His hands are clenched, his face in near grimace, Wood says, and his bump lacks the usual joy and exuberance. To Wood, the move indicates the president is uncomfortable opening himself up to others.

**Coolness rating:** Three of five, and sinking fast.

## The high-five

**Origins:** The high-five developed as an extension of the handshake in the 1970s.

**What it means:** While the handshake can be sterile and perfunctory, the high-five symbolizes joy, elation and power. But because the palm is open, Wood says, the high-five conveys the feeling that while there is power, there is no threat.

**Step by step:** Raise your hand above your head and, showing your open palm, slap the hand of your partner. The louder the slap, the better.

**Who's doing it:** Who isn't?

**Inherent dangers:** Novices may need to curb their enthusiasm until they develop a good high-five callous. Red palms are the beginner's bane.

**Coolness rating:** It's an oldie but a goodie and has yet to lose its coolness factor of four of five.

## The Peace Sign

**Origins:** In much of Europe the "V" sign is an obscene gesture along the lines of flipping someone the bird in this country. It may have had its origins in the 1300s, started by archers and symbolizing the drawing of a bow. Winston Churchill first used it to signal "V" for victory, and in the 1960s, the hippies adopted it as a sign for love. It later became associated with a gesture of peace.

**What it means:** Beyond the message of love or peace, Wood says flashing the peace sign tells others of your own personal beliefs and asks in return, "Are you part of my tribe? Are you one of my people?"

**Step by step:** Hold your hand up, palm facing outward. Curl the thumb, ring and little finger inward, leaving the index and middle finger extended to form a "V" shape.

**Who's doing it:** Mostly dead guys including Winston Churchill and Richard Nixon; millions of hippies. Now that we have a war to protest again, quite a few people are flashing the V although its popularity today pales in comparison to its use in the 1960s.

**Inherent dangers:** Muscle spasms and the danger of running into someone who isn't so peaceful.

**Coolness rating:** One of five.

## The Half-Hug /Back pat

**Origins:** In the 1980s, when men started to discover their softer side, they developed the half-hug and back pat.

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What it means: There's a lot going on with this simple-yet-awkward move. Those participating in the half-hug keep their hands open, indicating they are no threat. The body contact, Wood says, implies a certain level of affection and intimacy, but in a nonsexual way. The patting is a male way of showing affection through hitting. It says, "I love you, dude, but not in that way." Women also adopt the back patting when they become uncomfortable in an embrace, Wood says.

Step by step: Approach the huggee and bring one arm around the back of your partner, touching shoulders and part of the chest, but avoiding full frontal contact. Pat your partner's back with vigor. Manly swearing optional.

Who's doing it: Every male in the country, if no one's paying much attention to them.

Inherent dangers: The inexperienced often panic. Are they holding the embrace for too long? Is someone going to question their masculinity?

Coolness rating: Three of five.

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