

There's more to man's best friend

By Michael Korb

Dogs. Sure, they're man's – and woman's – best friend, but what do we really know about them? It turns out a lot less than you'd think.

Luckily we're about to get better acquainted with our furry BFFs, thanks to a new documentary by filmmakers Daniel and Donna Zuckerbrot called "A Dog's Life," which premieres Thursday, Nov. 21, on CBC Television's "The Nature of Things."

The one-hour documentary examines every detail of how our canine companions perceive the world from the moment they take their first morning walk to the time they curl up at our feet to go to sleep, and all the barking, running and begging in between.

The documentary explores the widespread assumptions that may actually be based on faulty and outdated research. Are dogs really like wolves? Do they need us to be their alpha dog so they know where to fit into the pack? Do they really see in black and white? Is it true that dogs have an amazing sense of direction?

The filmmakers travel from the familiar streets of London, Ont., and St. John's, N.L., all the way to Budapest, Hungary, to learn the answers.



What might be most surprising is that there are a lot of people actually researching dogs right now – in Hungary.

And one of the misconceptions that researchers are discovering is the notion of the alpha dog, which has been examined time and time again on dog-related TV shows. At the very least, dog relationships are a lot more complicated than previously thought.

"I didn't realize was how many assumptions dog lovers have been making about their animals that are totally off the mark," says Donna Zuckerbrot. "It was fascinating for us, as dog owners ourselves, to meet and speak with all the experts at the forefront of canine research and to learn so much about how our dogs are really experiencing the world."

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