

The myth of the **ALPHA DOG**



WHERE IT CAME FROM

- The “alpha dog” idea came from 1940s studies on unrelated captive wolves.
- These stressed wolves fought often and researchers assumed that dominance battles were normal in wolf and dog culture.
- But in the wild, wolves live in family groups, not in the “alpha” structure.
- Even the scientist who originally published the alpha wolf theory, Dr. David Mech, later fought to have his alpha book removed from circulation
- Unfortunately, the alpha theory was catchy and got repeated in books, TV shows, and pop culture.



WHAT WE KNOW NOW

- Misbehavior in dogs doesn't come from a place of “dominance” or desire to be the “alpha.” Instead, it often stems from confusion, fear, or natural and healthy biological instincts (like digging and chewing).
- Science has proven that dogs trained with positive methods rather than fear or dominance based methods learn faster, are less stressed, and are physically healthier.