

I HEARD IT THROUGH THE CANINE

HE'S MAN's best friend and just wants to please people - but sometimes dog-owners are a bit slow on the uptake.

Doggy language is a must if you have a pooch in your life, says one real-life Dr Doolittle.

But 'dog whisperer' Martin McKenna is not suggesting people learn to bark or growl.

The former Limerick street kid, known to millions of Australians as The Dreadlocked Dog-Man, learned how to communicate with dogs when he was homeless and had to share a barn with a pack of feral dogs.

Now he's written *The Boy Who Talked to Dogs*, a heartwarming memoir as well as a guidebook for owners who want to communicate with their pets.

It sounds barking mad, but it really is possible to talk in "dog language", says Martin.

Challenging

But first you have to show the dog who's boss.

Martin reveals that our furry friends are always on a mission to tame us and his book reveals "25 secret ways dogs become your boss". Dogs play games with us to decide who is the boss, who's second-in-command and who's in doggy doo-doo.

"Your dog can't help challenging everyone in your household - you, your partner, your kids, other dogs, your cat and even visitors," Martin says.

It's a natural instinct Mother Nature instilled in every dog to avoid them constantly fighting over the leadership. It's the reason why some dogs are naturally naughty and others are so easy to own. Some dogs are just born with more drive to challenge.

"Unfortunately, it's also the reason why the family dog can bite kids - the dog has won thousands of challenges against the child and has earned the right to discipline it with a growl or bite," Martin explains.

"When a strange dog suddenly attacks a child for no reason, it's going for a huge score - like 20,000 points in one huge, horrible challenge. It's being driven by that hunt-and-kill instinct and it's showing it's the boss of the



DR DOOLITTLE: Martin has a chat with pet pooch

Dog whisperer Martin reveals how to teach man's best friend who really leads the pack

By GERALDINE COMISKEY

area. Luckily, most dogs just go for small challenges," he adds.

"Pooping inside to dominate the den area is worth about 10 points. Barking for no reason except to invade everyone's eardrums and control the territory with noise is worth about two points per bark."

"Jumping up on someone is worth about 10 points. Knocking a kid over is worth 30 points."

"Running through a doorway or gateway before anyone else is worth about two or three points. Demanding you give your dog a pat every time it pushes your

hand with its nose is worth about one point per pat."

And, while petting a pooch under the chin might seem like a harmless way to show your love, to the dog, it means you're putting him in charge says Martin.

"If you pat your dog under the chin or on the chest you're saying in dog language: 'How about you be the boss?'"

"If you raise your chin and hold it there in a relaxed confident way, you're saying in dog language: 'Just relax, I'm taking control of this situation now.'

"It's a great way of getting your dog to listen to you much more. However, if you lower your chin, you're saying in dog language: 'Hey, I'm not sure I know what I'm doing, so how about you take control of everything?'"

"If you want to politely say, 'please go away' in dog language, raise your chin, fold your arms and turn your head away."

"It's great fun communicating with dogs - they adore it and are amazed when they realise a human is finally talking to them."

"However, with the serious breeds, you need to understand the games dogs play to know how they're winning points. Especially pit bulls. You can make all guard breeds much safer by making sure all humans win many more points than the dog."

Writing the book was an amazing feat for the dad of four (52), who was brutally bullied by teachers in his native Limerick for being dyslexic.

Chased

Dogs were his saviour when a particularly sadistic teacher threatened him.

"One day I jumped out the classroom window and ran home - but two of my teachers followed me in their car. When they walked in our gate, they threatened to drag me back to school and give me the biggest beating of my life, so I set my two German shepherds on them."

"The dogs bit and chased them out the gate back to their car. It felt like a glorious victory at the time, but was an unforgivably thoughtless thing for me to do."

It was only when he emigrated to Oz that he turned his talent for communicating with dogs into a career and his wife Lee taught him to read and write.

He's been a guest on more than 450 radio shows and on many TV shows, and has written three books on dog behaviour - *The Dog Man*, *What's Your Dog Telling You?* and *What's Your Dog Teaching You?*

You can see Martin's tips on YouTube at 'the dreadlocked dog man'. You can also see his free cartoon info sheets, *The International Language of Dogs*, at theinternationallanguageofdogs.blogspot.com.au.

The Boy Who Talked to Dogs is available in bookshops, on Amazon and audible.com.

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BETS ON THE BOX

with Féilim Mac An Iomaire



MCILROY 4/5 TO MAKE MEGHAN MARKLE HIS BIRDIE



As one of the world's top golfers and most eligible bachelors Rory McIlroy won't be having any troubles with the birdies both on and off the golf course, and

there was further evidence of this earlier in the week when reports emerged that he was making a beeline for Dublin to rendezvous with *Suits*' actress Meghan Markle.

Following the news we cut her odds of being the Hollywood man's next squeeze from 3/1 to 4/5 putting well ahead of Sasha Gale who's her closest rival for the golfer's affections at 7/2.

Also amongst the frontrunners is Irish model Nadia Forde at 4/1 and flirty golf fan Ashley Bongiovanni at 5/1 with Zoe Salmon at 10/1 to couple up with her fellow Northerner.

The four time major winner's ex Holly Sweeney is at 16/1 despite only recently having a baby while Tiger Woods' ex Elin Nordegren props up the betting at 100/1.

3/1 FOR MAYO MICK TO HAVE HIS BAN OVERTURED



As a dyed in the wool cuichie it's hardly surprising that I'm a massive GAA fan but despite this I'm the first to admit that there are a ridiculous amount of eejits who attend the games.

Eejits such as the grown man jostling behind Marty Morrissey to get screen time, the bucko who eats eight courses of sangwhiches over the course of 70 minutes and the gombeen whose sentences mesh into a multi-syllable word i.e. wouldyahjtitouttafack.

However, at this year's All Ireland semi-final at the Gaelic Grounds we were treated to a level of eejitery never before witnessed when a man dubbed 'Mayo Mick' burst his way on to the field to give the ref a piece of his mind.

The tale took another twist this week when the Mayo man revealed that he was going to appeal the ban but fortunately for the wider GAA community it's an unlikely 3/1 for common sense to go by the way of Mayo's All Ireland chances and for the ban to be overturned.

KEARNEY 7/4 TO MARRY AS STUNNER ROBS IRISH WOMEN OF THEIR DREAMS



It wasn't just the jersey that was green amongst female Irish rugby supporters this week after it emerged that Rob Kearney is off the market.

To heap further misery on the women of Ireland we make it a very realistic 7/4 for the couple to marry while it's 500/1 for the Samaritans to open up a helpline to help those affected by the Louth man's new relationship status.

PADDYPOWER.