

# Five Fears and Five Needs

(From the Book: *The One Thing You Need to Know* –  
Author: Marcus Buckingham)

Since it is important for an effective leader to tap into universals that all humans share, the obvious question is – what do we all share?

In a book called *Human Universals*, Anthropologist Donald Brown compiles a list of over 370 universals common to all societies. Some examples include joking, tickling, fear of snakes and toilet training.

Marcus Buckingham has extracted from this list five fears and the resulting five needs. He believes that satisfying one or more of these needs is a prescription for effectively leading people.

They are:

- 1) Fear of death - and the resulting need for security.
- 2) Fear of the outsider – and the resulting need for community.
- 3) Fear of the future – and the resulting need for clarity
- 4) Fear of chaos – and the resulting need for authority.
- 5) Fear of insignificance – and the resulting need for respect.

As a model, it may more effectively explain the rise of dictatorships than developing innate leadership abilities. But it is an interesting starting point for discussion.