Why? → **Why?** → **Why?** → **Why?** → **Why?**

5 Whys Method

The "5 Whys" method is a dead simple method you can use to dig deep into your users and uncover useful insights about their behaviour.

Quite literally, it involves asking your users "Why?" whenever they explain something to you. Each time you ask "Why?", you will prompt someone to re-evaluate their position in order to dig a little deeper into their own reasoning. It may seem a little odd to keep asking "Why?" at first, but it will bring great insights while allowing you to dig deeper in order to find the root cause(s) of their behaviours.

Practicing the "5 Whys" method is also useful to get you used to the idea of asking your interviewees or users "Why?", even though you think you already know the answer.

5 Whys was invented by Toyota, who used it for root cause analysis. They examined and addressed the problems with a welding robot as an example (see next page for the "5 Whys" conversation).

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[Continued from previous page]

In the example below, a robot has malfunctioned in a factory—see how the 5 Whys method helps to dig deep into the root cause of what you're examining:

"*Why* did the robot stop?"

The circuit has overloaded, causing a fuse to blow.

"*Why* is the circuit overloaded?"

There was insufficient lubrication on the bearings, so they locked up.

"*Why* was there insufficient lubrication on the bearings?"

The oil pump on the robot is not circulating sufficient oil.

"*Why* is the pump not circulating sufficient oil?"

The pump intake is clogged with metal shavings.

"*Why* is the intake clogged with metal shavings?"

Because there is no filter on the pump.

Of course, while the example above is of a mechanical nature, the 5 Whys method is also extremely effective in user interviews.

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Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide

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