## **Overview**

The Five Whys Method is a simple but powerful way to uncover underlying issues, ideas, or motivations, such as why people travel. When conducting user interviews, asking why often yields the most valuable insights.

In this activity, you’ll use the Five Whys Method to learn more about why your classmates are passionate about design.

## **Instructions**

**Part 1: Activity Setup**

1. Use Zoom breakout rooms.

**Part 2:** **Five Whys User Interview**

1. Decide which one of you will be interviewed first.
   * Set a timer for 5 minutes.
2. If you’re conducting the interview, ask your partner these questions:
   * First Why — “Why are you passionate about design?”
     1. Or... “Why did you decide to join this boot camp?”
     2. Or... “Why do you like to travel?”
   * Second Why — Allow your partner to answer, then ask, “Why?” again.
   * Third Why — Ask “Why?” again.
     1. *Tip! Write down notes as they answer—just a word or two (don’t transcribe their answer). So, if they say, “I like to see new places,” write down “new places.”*
   * Fourth Why — Ask “Why?” again.
     1. *Tip! You can ask “Why?” again and again or use your partner’s answer as part of the why. For example, “Why do you like to see new places?”*
   * Fifth Why — Ask “Why?” a final time.
     1. *Note: You should notice that by the fourth or final “Why,” your partner’s root reason for travel became clear.*
3. Now, switch roles, with the interviewer now being interviewed.
   * When the 5-minute alarm goes off, have group members switch and reset the timer.

**Part 3: Wrap Up and Share**

1. Type your partner’s *final* answer—the “root” reason why—into Slack.

**Final Thought**

As you wrap up your work, notice how the Five Whys helped you see things more deeply—a key ability of effective designers.

**In the Real World**

The Five Whys was pioneered at the Toyota Corporation under Taiichi Ohno and Sakichi Toyoda in the 1920s and remains a valuable method for identifying the root of a problem.  
  
**Resources:**

* <https://www.fastcompany.com/1669738/to-get-to-the-root-of-a-hard-problem-just-ask-why-five-times>
* <https://medium.com/productmanagement101/learn-about-the-five-whys-technique-78283d75800f>