

What?

How?

Why?

What-How-Why Method

The What-How-Why method is a tool to help you dive further into your user observations and derive deeper levels of understanding, and therefore empathy. With the What-How-Why method, you start with concrete observations—the **What**—and from there move to higher levels of abstraction—the **How**. You then finally arrive at the **Why**—i.e., the emotional drivers behind people's behaviors. This method is extremely useful if you want to analyze images or videos you have taken while you observe your users.

You Should Divide Your Observations into Three Sections: What, How and Why.

01: What

In **What**, note down the details of what happens during the user observation. What does the person do? What happens in the background? What does the person hold? Use **adjectives** to describe what happens and try to be as concrete as possible.

02: How

In **How**, describe how the person you observe carries out tasks. For instance, do they put in a great deal of effort? Does the person frown or smile while they carry out the task? Does the person use many ad hoc tools to make the task easier? Try to describe the emotional impact they experience as they perform the task.

03: Why

In **Why**, try to interpret the scene. Based on the **What** and **How** observations, you now need to guess the emotional drivers behind the person you observe. They might frown while they carry out a task because they are concerned they will hurt themselves in the process—which means safety is a driver of their behaviors.



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