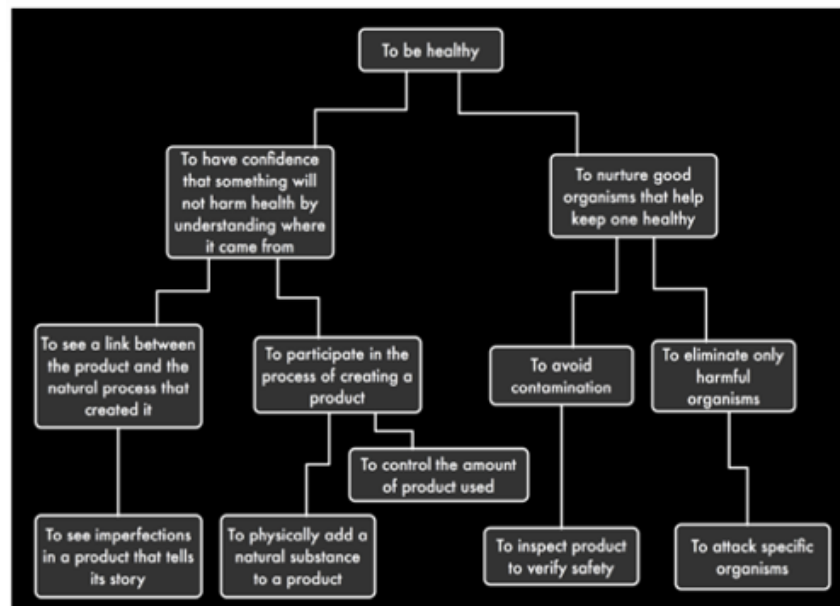


How to why-how ladder?



When considering the needs of your user, start with one meaningful one. Write that need on the board and then ladder up from there by asking 'why'. Ask why your user would have that need, and phrase the answer as a need. For example, "Why would she 'need to see a link between a product and the natural process that created it'? Because she 'needs to have confidence that something will not harm her health by understanding where it came from'." Combine your observations and interviews with your intuition to identify that need. Then take that more abstract need and ask why again, to create another need. Write each on the board above the former. At a certain point, you will reach a very abstract need, common to just about everyone, such as the 'need to be healthy'. This is the top of that need hierarchy branch.

You can also ask 'how' to develop more specific needs. Climb up ('why?') and down (how?) in branches to flesh out a set of needs for your user. You might come up to one need and then come back down. In the previous example, you climbed up to the 'need to understand where a product came from'. Then ask 'how' to identify the 'need to participate in the process of creating a product'. There will also be multiple answers to your 'whys' and 'hows' – branch out and write those down.

The result (after some editing and refining) is needs hierarchy that paints a full picture of your user or composite user. Alternatively, you can use this tool to hone in on one or two particularly salient needs.