| What? | Why? | How? |

What-How-Why Method

The What-How-Why method is a tool that you can use while observing people to help you dive into your observations and derive deeper levels of understanding. With the What-How-Why method, you start with concrete observations — the What — and from there move to higher levels of abstraction — asking How — and then finally you arrive at the Why—i.e., the emotional drivers behind people's behaviors. This method is extremely useful for you to analyze images that you might have taken while observing your users.

You should divide your observations into three sections: What, How and Why. You can print out our template on the next page and use it in your observation!

1 In What, note down the details of what is happening. What is the person doing? What is happening in the background? What is the person holding? Describe using adjectives and try to be as concrete as possible.

2 In How, describe how the person is doing what he or she is doing. For instance, is the person putting in a great deal of effort? Is the person frowning or smiling while doing the task? Does the person use many ad-hoc tools to make the task easier? Try to describe the emotional impact of performing the task.

3 Finally, in Why, try to interpret the scene. Based on the What and How observations, guess the emotional drivers behind the person you are observing. The person might be frowning while doing a task because she is concerned about hurting herself in the process — which means safety is a driver of her behaviors.

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What-How-Why Template

What	How	Why

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