



The Five Why's for Vision and Purpose

The Five Why's is a useful exercise to use when setting your sights on a goal - whether it be identifying objectives, clarifying vision or defining purpose. The concept is straightforward but it can require some quiet and serious reflection on the underlying drivers of your aspirations. I've used an example from an insightful post called "Leading by Design" by [Roger Price](#):

Planting trees: Using the five whys for identifying deeper individual or organizational purpose:

- Why are we digging these holes?
Answer: To plant trees (the first level of purpose).
- Why are we planting trees?
Answer: To beautify our city.
- Why are we beautifying our city?
Answer: To make it a more pleasant place to live, thus attracting people to move here.
- Why do we want people to move here?
Answer: It attracts talented people which helps to create a stronger economy.
- Why do we want a stronger economy?
Answer: It enriches people's lives—both those who can work hard and earn wealth and also nonprofit organizations that depend on the support of those with wealth.

You can see that while the goal of planting trees is quite good enough on it's own, digging deeper (pun intended :->) results in not only a richer and more meaningful purpose, it also provides a broader set of options for fulfilling that purpose.

Try it with a goal of your own and see what happens.