



Friends Exercise

A Quick and Fun Way to Find Your WHY

Your WHY is a statement of who you are that sums up what inspires you and the value you offer the world. It comes from your life experiences, so you have only one WHY that never changes (because you are who you are no matter what you do or where you go). You can use your WHY in nearly every aspect of your life, from finding a job to navigating your personal life.

The process of uncovering your WHY can take a few hours or longer. So we developed this exercise as a quick and simple way to get you in the ballpark (plus it's really fun to do).

Why are your friends your friends?

It seems like a simple question, but it's harder than you think. Clearly we're not friends with everyone. So why do you love *your* friends? And why do your friends love *you*?

Knowing your WHY answers that last question. Our WHY reveals our value in the lives of our friends. So the logic follows that by finding out the reason our friends love us, we can find our WHY. Great!

So all we need to do is ask our friends the reason they love us. This is a little easier said than done. Our limbic brain, the part of our brain that controls our emotions (like love), has no capacity for language. Our neocortex, the part of the brain that controls language, doesn't process emotion. That means we can't simply ask our friends the question, "Why are we friends?" and get a straight answer that reveals our WHY.

The good news is, a bunch of years ago, Simon figured out a way to get the answer that works!

Step 1: Who's your ride or die?

Think of friends you love and who love you. These are the people you trust unconditionally; they know they can call you at 3 AM and you'd be there for them...and that you could call at 3 AM with absolute confidence they will be there for you. Even if you only talk occasionally, you know you'll always have each other's backs.



Step 2: Ask those people, “Why are we friends?”

At first they may not understand the question. “I don’t know,” they might say. Some may ask, “What do you mean?” It’s not that they don’t know or understand; it’s because the part of the brain responsible for those feelings (trust, love, loyalty) doesn’t have access to language. Of course they know! It’s just biologically difficult to put feelings into words.

Give them some context to help them. Tell them it’s an exercise that you’re doing to learn more about yourself and it would be very helpful if they could work with you to answer the question. Then change the question slightly.

This is VERY important in the process. Instead of asking, “Why are we friends?” ask them, “What specifically is it about me that makes you know I’ll always be there for you?” This helps engage the part of the brain that CAN answer such an emotional question. They may hem and haw and say things like, “I don’t know, you’re loyal, I trust you, you’re nice.” All of those things will be true. But it doesn’t get to the specifics of YOUR value. So play devil’s advocate with them. “That’s good,” you can say, “that’s the definition of a ‘friend’, but WHAT SPECIFICALLY is it about ME that makes you know I’ll always be there for you?” They will still struggle, but you can’t help them and you can’t let anyone else help them. You have to let them go through the discomfort of the exercise.

Step 3: Listen

They will keep saying things like, “I don’t know. This is a really hard question.” Just let them keep talking while they struggle to find the right words. It may feel like they are going in circles, but just keep LISTENING. Eventually they will make a shift and start saying things like:

“I feel...”

“You make me feel...”

“When I’m around you, I feel...”

You will likely feel an emotional connection with this person when they describe themselves and the way they FEEL when they are with you. You may find yourself getting goosebumps on your arm or even a tear in your eye. We’re making progress!



Step 4: Clarify

Since you've likely never had this conversation with your friend before, use your curiosity about the things they've shared to ask more questions to clarify what they mean. Here's an example:

Friend: "I don't know. I guess I feel calm. I feel like no matter how stressed I am when I sit down with you, I just feel more relaxed."

You: "So no matter how stressed you are, when you and I get together, you forget your worries?"

Friend: "Not exactly. I feel like my worries aren't as big of a deal as I thought they were when we start talking about them."

You: "So I help you put things into perspective."

Friend: "Exactly! Then I feel much more calm."

Once you have a clear understanding of what your friend means, take good notes.

Step 5: Compare

As you compare your notes from the conversations you've had with different friends, you'll start to notice that friends are saying similar things about you. Take those keywords or phrases and list them below.

For example: My best friends say I...

1. Put things in perspective
2. Help make things more clear
3. Help them see the big picture

Once you've discovered what you have that your friends don't get from anyone else, you're one step closer to articulating your WHY. The world needs who you are at your natural best. As you continue your journey, remember that happiness comes from WHAT we do. Fulfillment comes from WHY we do it.

Want to continue your WHY journey?

- [Our live online WHY series](#)
- [Our on-demand Find Your WHY course](#)
- [Find Your WHY book](#)