



# A gentle guide to defining my WHY

*Hillside talks Podcast*

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When we want changes to happen in a certain area of our lives, it can be helpful (or even necessary) to take a good look at the deeper motivation. Also known as the “WHY”.

This gentle guide is meant to help you find your WHY no matter the area you want to work on.  
It is not meant as yet another thing you have to do.

I hope you print it out and find a nice quiet place, where you can be alone with your thoughts.  
So snuggle up on your couch with your favourite choice of drink or bring a blanket to your  
favourite park and enjoy the process.

Enjoy a bit of selfcare.

Hugs Maria

## #1: Define the area of your life you want to change.

Is there a specific repetitive problem or issue that keeps popping up in your life? Is it blocking you from growing as a person? Is it taking up mental space and causing stress and worry? Or is it taking up too much physical space and making it hard for you to rest and think?

Describe the issue and what consequences it has for you in your life:

When we get specific, we often remember better. List 1-3 specific consequences from what you wrote - keep it short;

## #2: Is your habit fueled by pain ?

Most things we would want to change are linked to habits. Some habits are hard to change, as they are often the results of emotional baggage like; neglect from parents or other caregivers, bullying, growing up with too little money to cover basic needs, etc. Life can really bash us around!

This baggage can be painful, but really important to deal with. Habits form deep neurological patterns in our brains, helping us avoid experiencing the pain again. The patterns also make it harder to break the habits. This can block us from ever really dealing with them.

Take some time to invite God into your pain. Our pain shapes how we see ourselves, so ask God to show you how He sees you - who you really are.

He loves you and wants to help you heal and thrive.

Describe your pain and spend some time with God. Let it all out - don't hold back.

Note: If this step brought up some severe wounds from your past, consider talking to a therapist. It can be too heavy to carry it alone. 

### #3: Visualizing exercise

Healing doesn't come overnight, but hopefully you are more aware now of what is going on underneath. I hope this will help you recognize and move past "stumbling blocks", as you become aware of them.

Now for something more lighthearted; I want you to visualize what your life would look like, if you changed this area of your life. Be creative. Draw, doodle, use colors - dare to dream!

## #4: Define your Why

We are getting really close now and the question is; WHY do you really want to see a change in this area of your life? WHY are you doing this?

Here is an example from my life regarding HEALTH.

I don't like working out and I have health challenges that make it even harder. I might be motivated to loose the extra weight I've gained by eating healthier, but my motivation only lasts about 2-4 weeks - I know, not impressive! On the other hand, I'm very lucky to have an active son, and I want to be able to somewhat keep up with him.

So my WHY for my health is: To stay active for him. I want to be able to play with him without getting exhausted too quickly, both now and in the future. I want to enjoy time on the trampoline, biking, playing soccer, or even running with him.

Having defined this “WHY” makes it easier to make healthy choices concerning what eat. I fail often, BUT I always get back at it again, because I have a strong WHY.

What is your deepest underlying reason for wanting change? Be honest, dig deep - it's okay if it hurts a little (in a good way). Most WHY's pull at our emotional heartstrings, that's why they are so powerful.

As previously mentioned, we tend to remember things better, when we condense our thoughts. Turn your WHY into 1-3 short sentences that you can easily remember.

## #5: the next right step

Congratulations on making it this far! You have taken an important first step toward becoming mindful of an issue. I hope it will help you make changes in your life, to patterns that don't serve you well.

Now I'm not going to ask you to make a complete action plan on how to achieve this change. But it IS helpful to add a bit of early action.

A practical way, to help you take the first steps in the right direction. My thoughts on goal-setting is: "if I don't set a goal, I don't know when I've reached a milestone - but more importantly - I miss the chance to celebrate a victory!"

Look at your Visualizing exercise - your dream. What could be your first small step to start moving in the right direction? Maybe you need to start saying NO, maybe you could prepare a few healthy snack recipes, maybe you want to declutter your closet or do a digital detox?

My first step into action will be:

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How will you practically accomplish this? Do you need to set aside some time? Do you need to involve an accountability friend?

**NOTE:** If you're ready to get more concrete and dive full-on into action, check out the Bonus Step on the next page.

## Some final thoughts

Keep in mind that you can have different WHY's for different areas in your life. My WHY for my wardrobe and my WHY for my finances are not the same. Consider re-printing this pdf, to go through the questions again, when you are ready to dig into a new area of your life.

I really hope this process was helpfull to you. I hope you walk away with your head held higher, knowing that you can change this area of your life!

I'm rooting for you and praying that you and God will begin a beautiful transformational journey together. Remember, God wants to help you clean out the old and the brokenness in your mental home and heart, to make room for the new and life giving.

Good luck - Maria

## #6 Bonus Step: Make a detailed plan

Sometimes what we need is to dive all in! So, if you are ready, write down all the concrete actions you want to take:

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Timeline: When do you want to work on each of these steps? The 12 boxes below represent the next 12 months. Fill out actions for each months and place your goals where they belong:


You've now created the big overarching timeline, but the changes are made in the everyday choices and decisions. Think about what you will have to change daily and weekly in order to accommodate space and time for action. Any commitments that need to go? Do you need to wake up earlier? Do you need restrictions on your screen time (to free up time)?

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Make it official by telling someone! Sometimes we need someone by our side to cheer, encourage and check in on us. Other times telling someone, just creates a bit of healthy pressure. Who do you want to tell about your plans and how they can help you succeed? 

The only thing left to do now - is to get started!

*Good luck - Maria*