

The **Five Whys** is a root-cause analysis tool developed within quality management. When applied to the **Ten Commandments**, it can help uncover the deeper principles behind each commandment rather than viewing them merely as rules.

The Ten Commandments as a System

Why should we obey the Ten Commandments?

Why #1: To avoid harmful behavior.

Why #2: Why avoid harmful behavior?

Because harmful behavior damages relationships.

Why #3: Why are relationships important?

Because individuals flourish through healthy relationships with God and others.

Why #4: Why is human flourishing important?

Because people are created with inherent dignity and purpose.

Why #5: Why do people have dignity and purpose?

Because they are created in the image of God.

Root Cause:

Respect for God's design and the inherent dignity of every person.

Applying Five Whys to Each Commandment

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.

Why? To maintain proper worship.

Why? Because misplaced worship distorts priorities.

Why? Because distorted priorities lead to harmful decisions.

Why? Because people become like what they worship.

Why? Because ultimate allegiance shapes character and destiny.

Root Cause:

Right worship creates right living.

2. You shall not make idols.

Why? To prevent false representations of God.

Why? Because false images distort truth.

Why? Because distorted truth leads to false beliefs.

Why? Because beliefs drive behavior.

Why? Because behavior determines the quality of life and relationships.

Root Cause:

Truth must not be reduced to human preferences.

3. You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Why? To show respect for God's name.

Why? Because names represent authority and character.

Why? Because disrespect erodes trust and reverence.

Why? Because trust is foundational to relationships.

Why? Because healthy relationships require integrity.

Root Cause:

Honor and integrity sustain trust.

4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Why? To set aside time for rest and worship.

Why? Because continuous labor depletes people.

Why? Because depletion reduces effectiveness and well-being.

Why? Because people need renewal.

Why? Because humans are finite beings created with limits.

Root Cause:

Human flourishing requires rhythms of work, rest, and worship.

5. Honor your father and your mother.

Why? To strengthen families.

Why? Because families shape character and values.

Why? Because values influence societal behavior.

Why? Because societal behavior affects community stability.

Why? Because civilization depends on healthy generations.

Root Cause:

Strong families are foundational to a healthy society.

6. You shall not murder.

Why? To protect life.

Why? Because human life has value.

Why? Because every person possesses dignity.

Why? Because dignity does not depend on usefulness or status.

Why? Because people are made in God's image.

Root Cause:

Human life is sacred.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

Why? To preserve marital faithfulness.

Why? Because trust is essential to marriage.

Why? Because broken trust damages families.

Why? Because family instability harms individuals and communities.

Why? Because long-term flourishing depends on covenantal commitment.

Root Cause:

Faithful commitment protects human flourishing.

8. You shall not steal.

Why? To respect others' property.

Why? Because theft violates fairness.

Why? Because fairness supports trust.

Why? Because trust enables cooperation.

Why? Because cooperation is necessary for a functioning society.

Root Cause:

Justice and trust make civilization possible.

9. You shall not bear false witness.

Why? To protect truth.

Why? Because lies distort reality.

Why? Because distorted reality leads to poor decisions.

Why? Because good decisions require accurate information.

Why? Because truth is essential for justice and trust.

Root Cause:

Truth is the foundation of justice.

10. You shall not covet.

Why? To avoid envy.

Why? Because envy breeds dissatisfaction.

Why? Because dissatisfaction often leads to harmful actions.

Why? Because harmful actions damage relationships.

Why? Because inner desires eventually shape outward behavior.

Root Cause:

Contentment protects both character and community.

Summary: The System Behind the Commandments

Viewed through a quality-management lens, the Ten Commandments form an interconnected system:

Commandments	Underlying Principle
1–4	Right relationship with God
5	Respect for authority and family
6	Sanctity of life
7	Faithfulness
8	Justice and stewardship
9	Truth and integrity
10	Contentment and purity of heart

Applying the Five Whys suggests that the commandments ultimately converge on a single systemic principle:

Love God wholeheartedly and love your neighbor as yourself.

This aligns with Jesus' summary of the Law (Matthew 22:37-40), which can be viewed as the deepest "root cause" beneath all Ten Commandments. From a Deming or systems-thinking perspective, the commandments are not ten disconnected rules but components of a system designed to promote human flourishing, social stability, and alignment with God's purposes.



Show how the application of the five whys relate to the Taguch Loss Funntion

The **Taguchi Loss Function** and the **Five Whys** are complementary tools.

- **Five Whys** asks: *What is the root cause?*
- **Taguchi Loss Function** asks: *What is the cost of deviating from the ideal condition?*

Together they answer:

What went wrong, why did it go wrong, and what is the societal loss resulting from the deviation?

Taguchi taught that quality is not merely conformance to specifications. Quality is measured by the **loss imposed on society when a system deviates from its target.**

Mathematically:

$$L = k(y - T)^2$$

Where:

- **L** = societal loss
 - **T** = target
 - **y** = actual condition
 - **k** = scaling constant
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The Ten Commandments as Targets

Viewed through a Taguchi lens, each commandment defines a **target condition** for human behavior.

The Five Whys helps us understand why the target exists.

The Loss Function helps us understand the consequences of missing the target.

1. No Other Gods

Target

Ultimate allegiance to God.

Five Whys Root Cause

Right worship shapes right priorities.

Loss Function

Deviation produces:

- Confused purpose
- Misaligned values
- Broken institutions

- Social fragmentation

The farther society moves from a shared moral center, the larger the loss.

2. No Idols

Target

Truthful understanding of reality.

Five Whys Root Cause

False beliefs drive harmful behavior.

Loss Function

Examples of modern idols:

- Money
- Power
- Political ideology
- Technology

Loss appears as:

- Corruption
- Exploitation
- Polarization
- Dehumanization

As attachment to idols increases, societal loss grows exponentially.

3. Honor God's Name

Target

Integrity between words and reality.

Five Whys Root Cause

Trust requires integrity.

Loss Function

Loss includes:

- Cynicism
- Hypocrisy
- Loss of credibility
- Erosion of institutions

When leaders invoke God while acting contrary to His character, societal trust declines.

4. Keep the Sabbath

Target

Balanced rhythm of work, rest, worship, and reflection.

Five Whys Root Cause

Humans are finite beings.

Loss Function

Deviation creates:

- Burnout
- Family breakdown
- Mental health decline
- Reduced productivity

Taguchi would recognize these as costs generated by operating a system outside its design parameters.

5. Honor Father and Mother

Target

Healthy intergenerational relationships.

Five Whys Root Cause

Strong families sustain civilization.

Loss Function

Loss appears as:

- Family instability
- Poverty
- Crime
- Educational challenges
- Social isolation

The farther a society departs from healthy family structures, the greater the cumulative loss.

6. Do Not Murder

Target

Respect for human life.

Five Whys Root Cause

Humans possess inherent dignity.

Loss Function

The loss is not limited to the victim.

It includes:

- Family suffering
- Community trauma
- Economic loss
- Fear
- Lost future contributions

This is a classic Taguchi concept:

The true loss extends far beyond the immediate defect.

7. Do Not Commit Adultery

Target

Marital faithfulness.

Five Whys Root Cause

Trust sustains families.

Loss Function

Loss spreads across:

- Spouses
- Children
- Extended families
- Communities

The "cost of poor quality" is often measured over generations.

8. Do Not Steal

Target

Respect for property and stewardship.

Five Whys Root Cause

Trust enables cooperation.

Loss Function

Loss includes:

- Security costs
- Reduced commerce

- Increased regulation
- Social distrust

Even small thefts impose costs on everyone.

Taguchi would call these societal losses.

9. Do Not Bear False Witness

Target

Truthfulness.

Five Whys Root Cause

Truth is necessary for justice.

Loss Function

Deviation produces:

- Bad decisions
- Wrongful convictions
- Corruption
- Misinformation

The loss grows rapidly because every future decision is now based on flawed information.

10. Do Not Covet

Target

Contentment.

Five Whys Root Cause

Inner desires drive behavior.

Loss Function

Coveting can lead to:

- Theft
- Fraud
- Adultery
- Resentment
- Class conflict

Many visible social problems are downstream losses from this internal deviation.

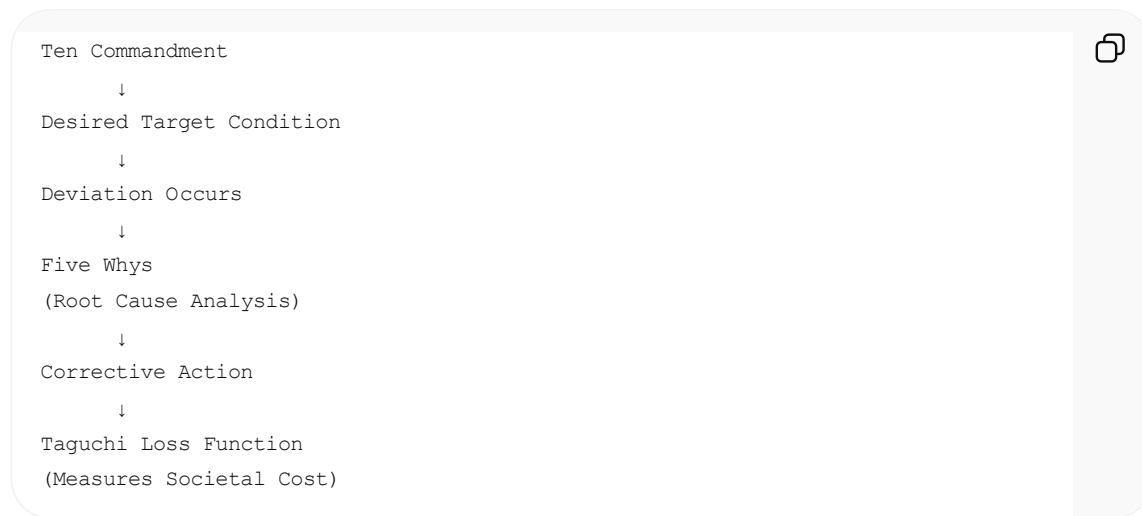
A Systems View

The Ten Commandments can be viewed as defining the **Target Condition for Society**.

The Five Whys identifies why each target matters.

The Taguchi Loss Function explains the consequences of deviation.

The relationship looks like this:

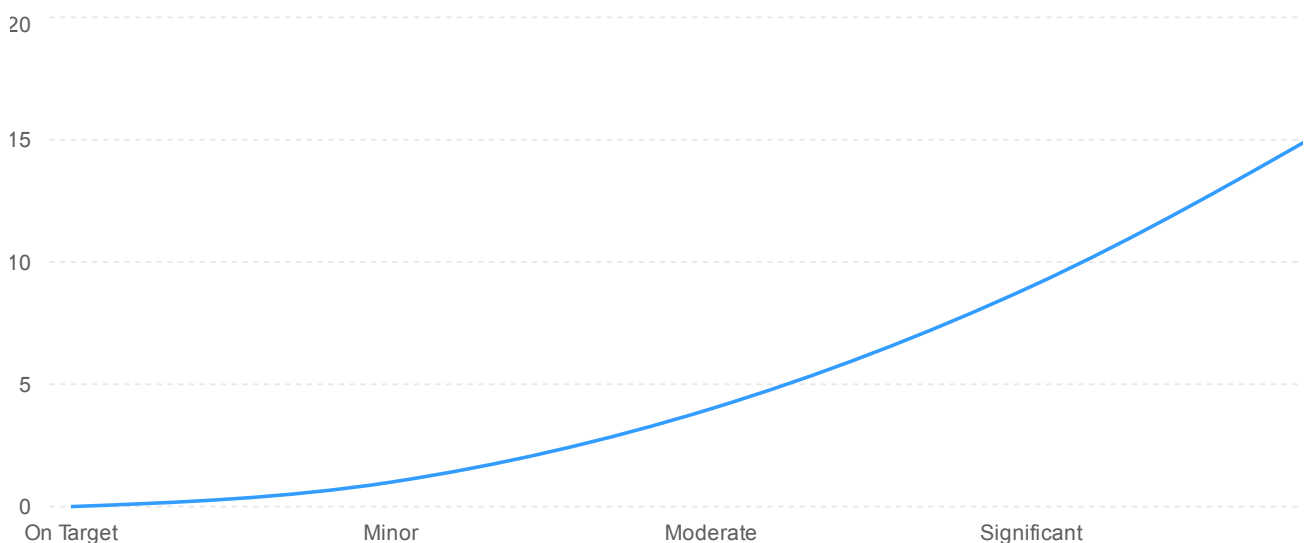


Visualizing Relative Societal Loss

The exact values are illustrative, not measurable, but they show the concept that loss grows disproportionately as society moves farther from the target.

Illustrative Taguchi Loss Applied to the Ten Commandments

Conceptual view showing that societal loss increases nonlinearly as behavior deviates from the target condition.



Connecting to Jesus' Summary of the Law

The Five Whys applied repeatedly to all Ten Commandments eventually converges on:

Love God.

Love your neighbor.

These become the **target values (T)** for the entire social system.

When individuals, families, churches, businesses, and governments move away from these targets, Taguchi would predict increasing societal loss. The farther the deviation, the larger the loss—not linearly, but exponentially. Thus, the Ten Commandments can be viewed as God's specification limits, the Five Whys as the method for discovering why those limits matter, and the Taguchi Loss Function as a way of understanding the cumulative cost to society if limits are ignored.

provide specific examples of each loss

One of Taguchi's most important insights is that **loss is not confined to the person committing the error**. The loss spreads outward to families, organizations, communities, and future generations.

When applied to the Ten Commandments, we can identify both **direct losses** and **societal losses**.

Commandment	Target Condition	Examples of Societal Loss
No Other Gods	Proper priorities	Loss of purpose, ideological extremism, social fragmentation
No Idols	Truth over substitutes	Consumerism, addiction, corruption
Honor God's Name	Integrity	Cynicism, distrust of leaders and institutions
Sabbath	Healthy rhythms	Burnout, family stress, mental health decline
Honor Parents	Strong families	Poverty, crime, educational challenges
Do Not Murder	Respect for life	Death, trauma, lost contributions
Do Not Commit Adultery	Faithfulness	Divorce, family instability, emotional harm
Do Not Steal	Property rights	Higher costs, security expenses, distrust

Commandment	Target Condition	Examples of Societal Loss
Do Not Bear False Witness	Truthfulness	Wrong decisions, injustice, misinformation
Do Not Covet	Contentment	Envy, resentment, social conflict

Let's examine each more deeply.

1. No Other Gods Before Me

Target

Ultimate allegiance to God.

Example Deviation

A society elevates political ideology above all other values.

Direct Loss

- Individuals become unwilling to consider opposing viewpoints.
- Relationships are sacrificed for political loyalty.

Societal Loss

- Increased polarization.
- Legislative gridlock.
- Breakdown of civic trust.
- Reduced ability to solve common problems.

Modern Example

Many Americans now report avoiding relationships with people from opposing political parties.

The loss extends far beyond disagreement.

It reduces social capital and national cohesion.

2. No Idols

Target

Seeking fulfillment in God rather than created things.

Example Deviation

Material wealth becomes the primary measure of success.

Direct Loss

- Workaholism.
- Anxiety.
- Neglect of family relationships.

Societal Loss

- Consumer debt.
- Environmental degradation.
- Rising dissatisfaction despite increasing wealth.

Modern Example

A corporate executive gains wealth but loses connection with spouse and children.

The financial gain is outweighed by relational loss.

3. Do Not Take God's Name in Vain

Target

Integrity and reverence.

Example Deviation

A leader publicly invokes faith while engaging in unethical conduct.

Direct Loss

- Personal hypocrisy.

Societal Loss

- Loss of trust in religious institutions.
- Young people become cynical toward faith.
- Reduced moral credibility of community leaders.

Modern Example

High-profile religious scandals often affect thousands of people who were not directly involved.

4. Remember the Sabbath

Target

Balanced work, rest, and worship.

Example Deviation

Employees are expected to be available 24/7.

Direct Loss

- Fatigue.
- Stress.
- Burnout.

Societal Loss

- Healthcare costs.
- Family instability.
- Reduced productivity.
- Mental health crises.

Modern Example

The World Health Organization has linked excessive work hours to increased health risks.

The loss affects workers, families, employers, and healthcare systems.

5. Honor Your Father and Mother

Target

Strong intergenerational relationships.

Example Deviation

Children grow up without stable parental involvement.

Direct Loss

- Reduced emotional support.
- Increased behavioral challenges.

Societal Loss

- Greater demand on schools.
- Increased welfare expenditures.
- Higher crime rates.
- Lower social mobility.

Modern Example

Numerous social science studies show correlations between family instability and adverse outcomes.

The costs are distributed across society.

6. Do Not Murder

Target

Respect for human life.

Example Deviation

A homicide occurs.

Direct Loss

- Loss of life.

Secondary Loss

- Grieving family.
- Psychological trauma.

Societal Loss

- Lost economic productivity.
- Criminal justice costs.
- Reduced neighborhood trust.
- Increased fear.

Example

If a young parent is murdered:

- Children lose a parent.
- Employer loses a worker.
- Community loses a contributor.

The ripple effects may last decades.

7. Do Not Commit Adultery

Target

Marital fidelity.

Example Deviation

A spouse engages in an affair.

Direct Loss

- Betrayed trust.

Secondary Loss

- Divorce.
- Emotional trauma.

Societal Loss

- Increased legal costs.
- Child emotional challenges.
- Reduced family stability.

Example

Research consistently finds that family disruption can create long-term impacts on children.

The loss often extends across generations.

8. Do Not Steal

Target

Respect for property.

Example Deviation

Retail theft.

Direct Loss

- Merchandise lost.

Secondary Loss

- Security systems.
- Additional staff.
- Insurance claims.

Societal Loss

- Higher consumer prices.
- Store closures.
- Reduced investment in affected communities.

Example

A \$100 theft may generate hundreds or thousands of dollars in prevention and enforcement costs.

This is classic Taguchi loss thinking.

9. Do Not Bear False Witness

Target

Truthfulness.

Example Deviation

False testimony in court.

Direct Loss

- Wrongful conviction.

Secondary Loss

- Innocent person imprisoned.
- Actual offender remains free.

Societal Loss

- Erosion of confidence in justice.
- Increased legal costs.
- Community distrust.

Modern Example

False information online can influence millions of decisions.

The loss expands exponentially because future actions are based on false premises.

10. Do Not Covet

Target

Contentment.

Example Deviation

Persistent envy of another person's success.

Direct Loss

- Personal dissatisfaction.

Secondary Loss

- Resentment.
- Relationship strain.

Societal Loss

- Class conflict.
- Fraud.
- Theft.
- Political extremism.

Example

Many financial crimes begin with coveting what belongs to someone else.

The outward behavior is often preceded by an inward deviation from the target.

The Largest Insight

If Deming and Taguchi were evaluating the Ten Commandments, they would likely focus on a key systems principle:

Most visible societal problems (crime, corruption, family breakdown, addiction, polarization, injustice, poverty, and violence) are not the root causes.

They are often the **losses** generated when people and institutions deviate from fundamental target conditions.

The **Five Whys** helps identify the root cause of the deviation.

The **Taguchi Loss Function** helps estimate the cost of that deviation.

Together they suggest that the Ten Commandments can be viewed not merely as religious rules, but as a set of **design specifications for minimizing societal loss and maximizing human flourishing**. The farther individuals and institutions move from those targets, the greater the cumulative loss imposed on families, communities, and future generations.



Identify the metrics (data) that can be collected and used to manage each loss

This is where the framework becomes especially useful from a **Deming, Taguchi, and systems-thinking perspective**.

A principle often attributed to quality management is:

"You cannot manage what you do not measure."

The Ten Commandments establish the **target condition**. The Taguchi Loss Function identifies the **cost of deviation**. The next step is to identify **leading and lagging indicators** that allow a community, church, county, state, or nation to monitor movement toward or away from the target.

The challenge is that many of the commandments involve **moral and spiritual conditions** that cannot be measured directly. Therefore, we measure the *effects* of deviation.

Framework

Element	Example
Commandment	Do Not Steal
Target	Respect for property
Loss	Theft, security costs, distrust
Metrics	Theft rate, insurance claims, security spending

Element	Example
Improvement Goal	Reduce deviation from target

1. No Other Gods Before Me

Target

Shared moral purpose and proper priorities.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Weekly worship participation
- Volunteerism rates
- Charitable giving
- Civic participation
- Voter turnout

Lagging Indicators

- Social trust surveys
- Loneliness rates
- Suicide rates
- Substance abuse rates
- Political polarization indices

County-Level Sources

- Census
 - Gallup surveys
 - CDC
 - County health assessments
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2. No Idols

Target

Healthy priorities.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Household debt-to-income ratio
- Consumer spending on discretionary goods
- Average weekly work hours
- Personal savings rates

Lagging Indicators

- Bankruptcy rates
- Gambling addiction
- Substance abuse
- Divorce related to financial stress
- Anxiety/depression rates

Example Loss Measure

$$Loss = f(Debt, Addiction, FamilyStress)$$

3. Honor God's Name

Target

Integrity.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Ethics training participation
- Transparency measures
- Public accountability practices

Lagging Indicators

- Corruption convictions
- Ethics complaints
- Public trust surveys
- Institutional credibility ratings

Example

A decline in trust in churches, government, or business may indicate increasing deviation.

4. Remember the Sabbath

Target

Healthy work-rest balance.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Average weekly work hours
- Vacation usage
- Religious participation
- Family meal frequency

Lagging Indicators

- Burnout rates
- Stress-related illness
- Mental health diagnoses
- Employee turnover

Example

Many employers already measure burnout and turnover as quality indicators.

5. Honor Father and Mother

Target

Healthy family structure.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Marriage rates
- Two-parent household rates
- Family meal frequency
- Parent involvement in schools

Lagging Indicators

- Child poverty
- Juvenile crime
- School discipline incidents
- High school graduation rates
- Elder neglect cases

County Dashboard Example

Metric	Current	Trend
Marriage Rate	52%	↓
Graduation Rate	89%	↑
Juvenile Arrests	12/1000	↓

6. Do Not Murder

Target

Respect for life.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Domestic violence reports
- Violent crime reports
- Gang activity
- Mental health crisis calls

Lagging Indicators

- Homicide rate
- Suicide rate
- Infant mortality
- Drug overdose deaths

Example

Many public-health organizations now treat violence as a measurable public health issue.

7. Do Not Commit Adultery

Target

Marital faithfulness.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Marriage counseling participation
- Family engagement activities
- Time spent together

Lagging Indicators

- Divorce rates
- Single-parent households
- Child behavioral problems
- Domestic conflict reports

Important Note

Because adultery itself is difficult to measure directly, most measures focus on outcomes.

8. Do Not Steal

Target

Respect for property.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Unemployment rates
- Poverty rates
- School attendance
- Financial literacy participation

Lagging Indicators

- Theft reports
- Shoplifting incidents
- Fraud cases
- Insurance claims
- Security expenditures

Example

Retailers often calculate:

$$\textit{Shrinkage} = \textit{Inventory} - \textit{Sales}$$

This is a direct measure of loss.

9. Do Not Bear False Witness

Target

Truthfulness.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Media literacy participation
- Ethics education
- Transparency measures

Lagging Indicators

- Perjury convictions
- Defamation cases
- Fraud reports
- Public trust surveys
- Misinformation prevalence studies

Example

Trust is one of the most important measurable indicators.

10. Do Not Covet

Target

Contentment.

Possible Metrics

Leading Indicators

- Household debt
- Consumer spending trends
- Social media usage
- Volunteer participation

Lagging Indicators

- Financial fraud
- Embezzlement
- Bankruptcy
- Depression rates
- Life satisfaction surveys

Example

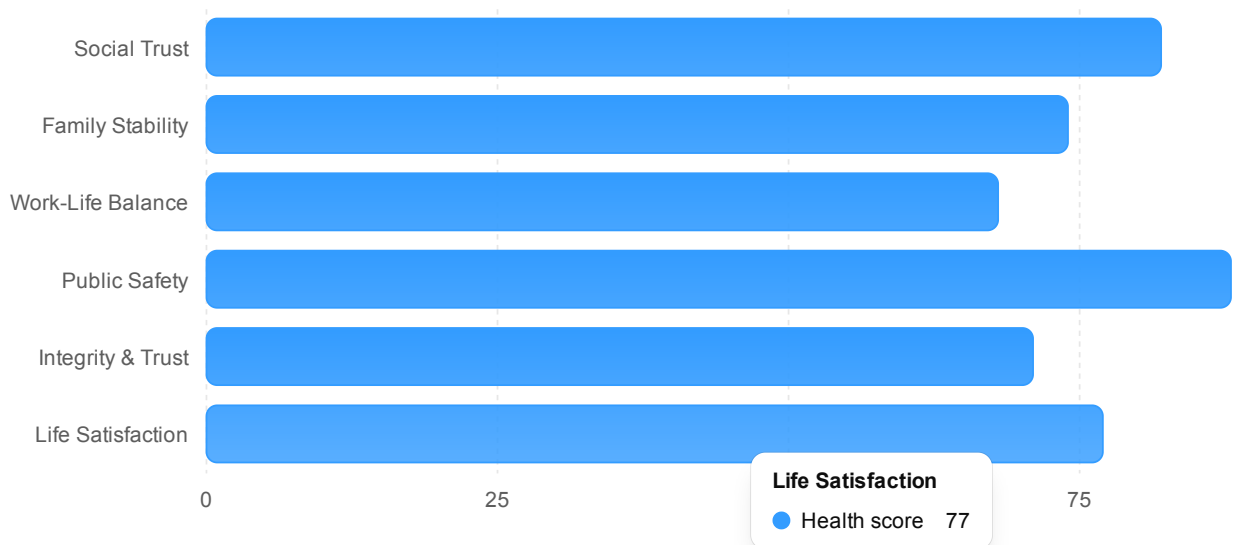
Research consistently shows relationships between social comparison and reduced life satisfaction.

A Brown County Dashboard Example

If you were developing a **"More Perfect Union Dashboard"** for Brown County, Indiana, the measures might look like this:

Illustrative Community Flourishing Indicators

Example dashboard metrics aligned with the Ten Commandments and societal loss framework.



From Quality Management to Public Policy

Deming would likely ask:

What is the system producing these results?

Taguchi would ask:

What is the societal loss created when these measures move away from their target?

The Ten Commandments then become less a list of prohibitions and more a set of **system-level aims**. The metrics provide evidence of performance, the Five Whys helps identify root causes when performance deteriorates, and the Taguchi Loss Function provides a way to estimate the cost of deviation from the desired condition.

This creates a complete management system:

Commandment → Target Condition → Metrics → Observed Deviation → Five Whys → Root Cause → Improvement Action → Reduced Societal Loss.

     ...  Sources