

# The Next Rules of Work

## The Aristotle Canvas: Mini-Workbook for INDIVIDUALS

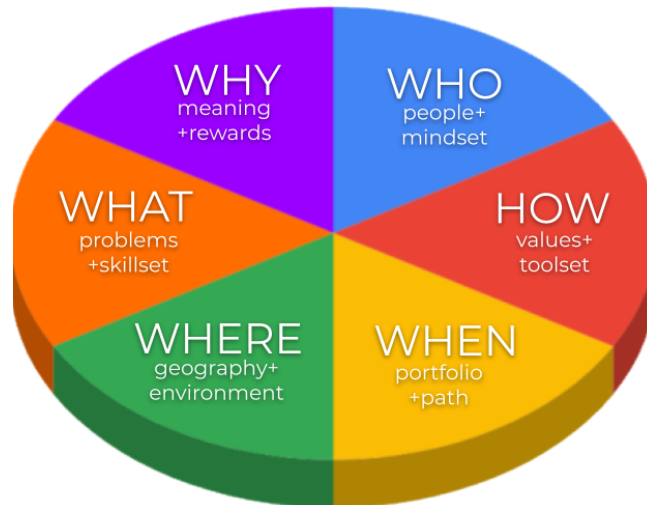
This mini-workbook contains content from [The Next Rules of Work: The mindset, skillset, and toolset to lead your organization through uncertainty](#) (August 2021, Kogan Page) by Gary A. Bolles. Please do not forward or reproduce. *Learn more at [gbolles.com/nextrules](http://gbolles.com/nextrules)*

The purpose of this exercise is to gain some rapid insights into your own priorities and plans for your relationship with the world of work.

### BACKGROUND

As you will remember from reading “The Next Rules of Work” (you have read it, correct?), one of the key Rules is to “enable growth.” Personal growth often begins most effectively by self-knowledge, through a process of self-inventory.

When it comes to your work, the key issues we’re exploring here are “the six W’s”: *What, Where, Who, When, Why, and how?* (You will remember, of course, that these were the six questions Aristotle would ask to determine if an act was moral.)



In Silicon Valley, we are very fond of “canvases,” single-page reviews of key information useful for decision-making. Perhaps the most famous is the Lean Startup Canvas, popularized by Eric Ries.

*The Aristotle Canvas* is a review of six important facets of your relationship to work - the philosopher’s six W’s. Each key point has two facets of its own. Here is an overview of those points.

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# AN EXERCISE FOR YOU: THE ARISTOTLE CANVAS FOR INDIVIDUALS

**Step 1:** Complete your own canvas.

Write one or two sentences describing your answer to each of the 12 questions on the canvas. Don't think too long about any answer: Try to jot down the first thing that comes into your mind. (You can always change your answers.) The goal is to get the Canvas completed so that you can take a step back and look at the synergies between the elements.

Here are the 12 questions:

WHY	MEANING <i>Why do you work? What gives your work purpose?</i>	REWARDS <i>How do you want to be compensated for your work ? Income, benefits, advancement, etc.?</i>	PEOPLE <i>Who are the kinds of people you most enjoy working with?</i>	MINDSET <i>What kind of organizational culture is the best fit for you?</i>	WHO
WHAT	PROBLEMS <i>What problems do you most love to solve?</i>	SKILLSET <i>What skills do you most love using to solve those problems?</i>	VALUES <i>What beliefs drive your work? What values must be reflected in your work?</i>	TOOLSET <i>What strategic and technical tools do you most like to use in your work?</i>	HOW
WHERE	GEOGRAPHY <i>Where in the world do you want to do your work?</i>	ENVIRONMENT <i>What kind of working environment helps you do your best work?</i>	PORTFOLIO <i>What is the ideal mix of work for you today? How will you manage that portfolio of work?</i>	PATH <i>When would you like to do certain kinds of work in the future? What future scenarios most excite you?</i>	WHEN

Using the blank form below, jot down a sentence or two, describing the first idea that comes into your mind. Don't spend a lot of time on any of your answers to each of these questions (at least, not the first time you do it).

WHY	MEANING	REWARDS	PEOPLE	MINDSET	WHO
WHAT	PROBLEMS	SKILLSET	VALUES	TOOLSET	HOW
WHERE	GEOGRAPHY	ENVIRONMENT	PORTFOLIO	PATH	WHEN

If you need more space, copy this grid on a bigger piece of paper, or download the PDF at [gbolles.com/canvas](http://gbolles.com/canvas).

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

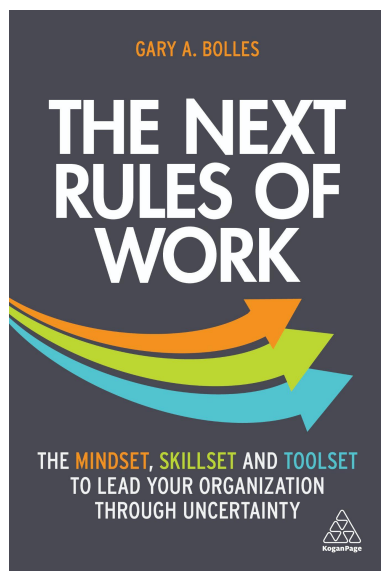
**Step 2:** When you are done, look at the various elements in your Canvas, and check to see how consistent you think your answers are. Do they all line up in a way that's consistent to you? Is there anything you need to change? Make any changes you think are necessary.

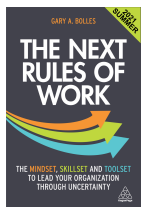
**Step 3:** Show your canvas to someone who knows you well. That could be your life partner, or a good friend, or a close co-worker. Ask them if they think it's a good reflection of what they know about you.

**Step 4:** If you are currently working, ask yourself: Are there any changes I need to make in my work to better align it with my Canvas? If you are not currently working, but are looking for work, ask yourself: Is there anything I need to do differently, about the work I'm looking for, to better align with my Canvas?.

**Bonus points:** If you want to learn more about yourself, sit down and write a full paragraph to expand your answers for each of the 12 questions.

*Learn more at [gbolles.com/canvas](https://gbolles.com/canvas).*





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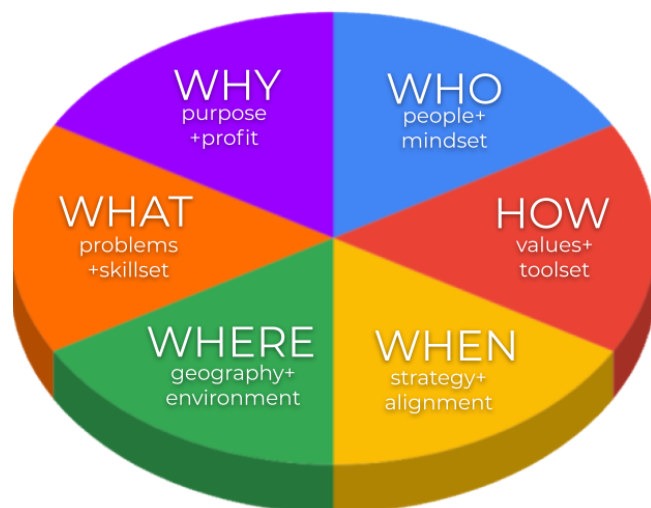
## The Aristotle Canvas: Mini-Workbook for ORGANIZATIONS

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The purpose of this exercise is to practice an *Alignment* process for your organization and key stakeholders.

### BACKGROUND

Why “alignment”? One of the key Next Rules of Work is to Encourage Alignment, using techniques that continually enable stakeholders in your organization to connect their work and their goals. One way to bring key issues to the surface is for each stakeholder to jot down key issues, then synthesize with others to develop a more-aligned *mindset* in your organization. The key issues we’re exploring here are “the six W’s”: *What, Where, Who, When, Why, and how?* (You will remember, of course, that these were the six questions Aristotle would ask to determine if an act was moral.)



How can we use these to align perspectives? In Silicon Valley, we are very fond of “canvases,” single-page reviews of key information useful for decision-making. Perhaps the most famous is the Lean Startup Canvas, popularized by Eric Ries.

*The Aristotle Canvas* is a review of six important facets of your organization in the context of work - the philosopher’s six W’s. Each key point has two facets of its own. Here is an overview of those points.

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# AN EXERCISE FOR YOU AND OTHERS ON YOUR TEAM: THE ARISTOTLE CANVAS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

**Step 1:** Complete your own canvas for your organization.

Write one or two sentences describing your answer to each of the 12 questions on the canvas. Don't think too long about any answer: Try to jot down the first thing that comes into your mind. (You can always change your answers.) The goal is to get the Canvas completed so that you can take a step back and look at the synergies between the elements. Here are the 12 questions:

WHY	VISION <i>What gives your organization meaning and purpose? Who are its key stakeholders?</i>	MISSION <i>What are your organization's goals? What is it trying to accomplish in the world?</i>	PEOPLE <i>What kinds of people does your organization need to create value for its stakeholders?</i>	MINDSET <i>What kinds of behaviors by those people are rewarded in your organization?</i>	WHO
WHAT	PROBLEMS <i>What value does your organization create for its stakeholders?</i>	SKILLSET <i>What core skills does your organization have to solve problems and create value?</i>	VALUES <i>What core values define the way the organization conducts its activities?</i>	TOOLSET <i>What key technologies &amp; techniques does the organization use to enable it to create value?</i>	HOW
WHERE	GEOGRAPHY <i>Where in the world does the organization do its work?</i>	ENVIRONMENT <i>What kind of working environment helps the organization's workers to do their best work?</i>	STRATEGY <i>What scenarios will allow the organization's workers to continually deliver value to its stakeholders?</i>	ALIGNMENT <i>How does the organization continually align everyone with the organization's goals?</i>	WHEN

Remember that the Vision is a statement about the world your organization would like to help create, a vision that may never be achieved in your lifetime. Its Mission is how it will work to make that Vision a reality, which should be achievable. Your organization may already have well-developed answers for some of these, such as its vision and mission: If so, jot brief versions down for those answers, and then answer the other questions. If your organization hasn't clearly articulated the answers to any of these, then simply "assert" what you believe they either are or should be. You can do this exercise by reproducing the categories below on a blank piece of paper, or by downloading the PDF version at [gbolles.com/canvas](http://gbolles.com/canvas).

Using the blank form below, jot down a sentence or two, describing the first idea that comes into your mind. Don't spend a lot of time on any of your answers to each of these questions (at least, not the first time you do it).

WHY	VISION	MISSION	PEOPLE	MINDSET	WHO
WHAT	PROBLEMS	SKILLSET	VALUES	TOOLSET	HOW
WHERE	GEOGRAPHY	ENVIRONMENT	STRATEGY	ALIGNMENT	WHEN

If you need more space, copy this grid on a bigger piece of paper, or download the PDF at [gbolles.com/canvas](http://gbolles.com/canvas).

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2:** When you are done, scan your Canvas, and look to see how consistent you think your answers are. Is there anything you need to change?

**Step 3:** Talk to others on your team. Ask them to complete the Canvas from their individual perspectives. Don't tell them about any of the answers you have given; let them answer on their own.

**Step 4:** When they have completed their versions of the Canvas, sit down with them and read out each of your answers, starting with having each person read their perception about the organization's Vision.

**Step 5:** Have an open discussion. Where are you generally aligned? Where do you differ? What work needs to be done to align your perspectives?

**Bonus points:** Encourage other teams throughout your organization to do this exercise.

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