



*People Don't Quit Their Jobs;
They Quit Their Bosses* J. Green
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BOOK REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

In *People Don't Quit Their Jobs; They Quit Their Bosses*, Jennifer-Ruth Green, a senior U.S. Air Force officer and CEO of Battle Proven Leadership, offers a guide to effective leadership. Published in 2024, the book is structured into three parts- *Leadership Fundamentals*, *Leadership & You*, and *Leading Others*. Each section provides insights and personal anecdotes from both combat and corporate contexts. Green distinguishes between leadership and management, emphasizing the importance of trust and culture in team dynamics, and explores practical strategies for decision-making, expectation management, and developing future leaders. The book is designed for leaders at all levels seeking to enhance their skills and build thriving teams. While Green could provide more in depth correlation in regard to the military to civilian transition and corporate leadership, the book can be supplemented with additional training seminars available through her company Battle Proven Leadership.

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Leadership seems to be a hot topic as many people are yearning for ways to be better leaders in their professional and personal lives. A simple Google search for “best books on leadership” yields countless results on how to be a good leader. Additionally, when adding “for veterans” to the search, the list shortens, and two distinct topics emerge. One topic is primarily focused on how to lead in the military. The other is how to apply military leadership in a corporate environment. According to Sara Hylton (2021), as referenced in the U.S. Department of Labor Blog, in 2020, veterans represented 5.6% of the total civilian labor force. Therefore, veterans in the workplace can leverage their military experience to become effective leaders in their civilian occupations. Understanding the value of leadership, utilizing strategic thinking and decision-making skills, team building, and being resilient with the ability to adapt to the business landscape are just a few examples of how people in both managerial and non-managerial positions can exhibit leadership in various ways.

Jennifer-Ruth Green, CEO/Founder of Battle Proven Leadership, who served as a senior U.S. Air Force officer with proven leadership as a pilot, combat mission commander, and Chief Information Officer (CIO) intends to show others how to do just that in her book *People Don't Quit Their Jobs; They Quit Their Bosses*. Published in 2024, Green's book focuses on practical leadership that helps individuals create a thriving workplace. Green describes her book as “a culmination to date of leadership lessons I learned. My desire is to be vulnerable as I share best practices learned from successes and failures as a leader and as a follower” (p. xi). She provides examples from both the combat and corporate world that demonstrate practical applications for the reader to independently explore their professional career trajectory.

The easy-to-follow layout divides the book into three parts— *Leadership Fundamentals*, *Leadership & You*, and *Leading Others*. Each chapter starts with a quote and a few short discussion pages with headings to break up the content. The material is designed to introduce leadership in a familiar non-academic style. Green uses personal examples from her time in the Air Force to illustrate various topics. As stated at the end of the preface, Green hopes that “this book allows you to both know and do better. I want you to walk away with renewed confidence as you step into your role each day. I want you to be confident in the value you bring to the team, confident in the culture you set, and confident in the strategies necessary to become a leader worth following” (p. xi).

In Part I— *Leadership Fundamentals*, Green includes topics such as an introduction to leadership, how to fight for your people, shaping the cultural environment, identifying and solving problems, and effective communication. In the first

chapter, she starts by defining the difference between a leader and a manager—leaders lead people, and managers manage tasks. Despite the interchangeable usage society has placed on them, these words are not synonymous. For example, leaders only need one follower; however, managers may not necessarily be leaders. In short, Green implies that managers may be put in positions without the knowledge base to be good or effective leaders. Finally, through a discussion about trust, Green provides specific examples of how she gave and earned trust with others, which helped solidify that people need trust to eventually become a team.

In the second chapter, Green provides three ways to fight for your people. She reflects on a training course taken in 2009 during a deployment to Baghdad, Iraq, and states, “A leader must fight for those you know, fight for those you do not know, and fight for those who will never know your name” (p. 13–15). In reflecting on her story, Green quotes Richard Grenier, who summarized George Orwell's saying, “People sleep peacefully in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf” (p. 13). In short, Americans can rest well at night because of those who are defending our country.

In the third chapter, Green discusses the cultural environment of a team. Through her examples, this may be one of the most applicable chapters to fit one's personal situation. The discussion of culture and the introduction of values relate to trust, which is how all teams are built. Green states, “Leaders are responsible for shaping the culture of a company. When you create a calm environment with a harmonious relationship between the leadership and people, then you develop a group of people who trust one another— you develop a team” (p. 21). All leaders need to make decisions, but Green challenges the reader to make “good decisions” and provides a short but tangible list of ways to do just that in chapter 5. The list includes discussion on recognizing that good is not always the enemy of best, striving for excellence, understanding that indecision is a reality, difficulties assessing the information, decision fatigue, and mental health.

In Part II— *Leadership & You*, Green helps the reader recognize the gravity of their role as a leader, master the four elements of leadership, commit to personal principles, and provide clear direction when leading others, and why the reader should not take the responsibility of this role lightly. In chapter seven, Green then challenges leaders to master the four elements of leadership—toolset, skillset, mindset, and heartset. She reinforces, “Leadership begins when the power of love overrules the love of power” (p. 63). Understanding one's own toolset and skillset is important because they provide the competence to do a job. To excel as a leader, you need to expand your perspective and ensure you have proper motives” (p. 63). Part II concludes

with understanding and committing to your own personal values and how to provide clear direction through mission, vision, and goals.

In Part III– *Leading Others*, Green broaches the topics of identifying potential and promotion, developing other leaders, providing expectation management, developing two-way confidence in people, confronting issues without being confrontational, and running effective meetings. As much as we would like to promote others and be promoted ourselves, there are times when the promotion to a leadership position is not in the best interest of the company. Therefore, “leadership is something you assume but cannot discard” (p. 88). Nonetheless, leaders need to be developed, and Green challenges leaders to search within their teams to find those with potential. Moreover, by identifying creative ways to recognize and reward them, Green states, “The employee may be the best at their job, but that doesn’t make them a proper candidate for leadership” (p. 91). However, good leaders can be retained by having their value developed and recognized. Leaders should take the time to invest in those who are committed to them. Green briefly mentions, “ill-advised promotions that do not help the team or build trust and confidence of team members must be addressed by the leader” (p. 92). She states that letting an individual go isn’t the only option; she proposes finding a role elsewhere within the company that is a better fit. The inferred takeaway is that promotion is not always the best reward. Find rewards that the employee desires and remember that a promotion may not always be a desired reward.

Chapters 13–15 address specific leadership components that take time to develop. Green provides a robust discussion on expectation management (both up and down the chain of command) and how to build confidence. She proposes an equation for engaging others at “70% affection, 20% direction, and 10% correction” (p.114). Leaders need to strike a balance to not off-put their team but to bolster confidence in their ability to go above and beyond. She ends with strategies on how to confront issues and how to run effective meetings. As Green leaves the reader with some final thoughts, she reiterates that leadership is an art that requires practice. She shares a Tweet from Jim Kwik that says, “On the days you only have 40% and you give 40%, you gave 100%” (p. 140).

As business leaders, some veterans may face challenges like transitioning skills to the civilian sector or working with a blended team of civilians and veterans. Green uses personal examples from her military experience to explain concepts in a military context. Through her examples, she identifies what she did correctly and her limitations, which often included a reflection on how she could have performed better. Discussion is somewhat limited regarding relating military experience to civilian life. However, this book provides a foundation on how to be a better leader. One critique is that she could have provided concrete examples of specific frameworks mentioned, such as the responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed (RACI) Matrix. This would be best illustrated in an appendix or table within the book.

Nonetheless, Jennifer-Ruth Green effectively illustrates how to become the leader people want to follow. While this book is written by a veteran, it can be easily used by veteran and civilian leaders alike. For those interested in additional resources, through her company, Battle-Proven Leadership, Green offers three training seminars that she designed to follow the three parts of her book. More information about Battle-Proven Leadership can be found at www.battleprovenleadership.com.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Competing interests for this book could be other leadership books.

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