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BOOK REVIEW:

The Progress Principle, by Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer

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How often do the people on our team, or the people we work with, or even we ourselves, lack the motivation to get work done or solve the problems we face at work on a daily basis?

If we lead or manage others, workforce engagement is one of the greatest challenges facing us and our organizations today. Engagement has, perhaps, the single greatest impact on achieving meaningful results and performance in the workplace. But how can I advance the engagement and performance of my team, department or unit?

The Progress Principle is one of the most applicable business books I've read on the topic of increasing workforce engagement. It provides solid grounding in the fundamental leadership strategy of driving progress on meaningful work using relevant and sustainable actions.

What makes this book unique is that it's the first one I've read in which the conclusions are based on substantial data provided by people struggling with this very issue. It shares the results of breakthrough research on engagement and creativity conducted by Amabile and Kramer, and this research is the most detailed I've read about what motivates high performance in the workplace.

The authors conducted an in-depth and detailed study of nearly 12,000 diary entries provided by hundreds of employees from several organizations detailing their thoughts and feelings as they try to solve the problems they face each day at work. The study was intended to explore the relationship between leaders and their people, and the impact leaders have on engagement.

The most significant factor influencing high engagement is the leader's role in facilitating *progress* toward accomplishing meaningful work, *even*



if the progress is only incremental or seemingly small! Facilitating progress was found to more significantly boost motivation and productivity than the factors people more often think about first, like higher pay or rewards and recognition. How a leader influences others' ability to make progress makes the biggest difference in quality of performance and level of engagement.

It may not seem like a rocket science, and it's not. It reinforces things that we often overlook, but probably realize when we really think about it—accomplishments lead to happiness and positive feelings; happiness and positive feelings lead to creativity and energy; creativity and energy lead to more accomplishments, etc. While it focuses on engaging others, we can also apply the learning and application to our own daily lives to increase our own motivation and productivity. The book is a great read and very informative for anyone who leads others and is looking to increase the impact he or she can have in their organization. ●