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## **Book review FOOD FOR THOUGHT by Ichak Kalderon Adizes<sup>1</sup>**

It gives me a great pleasure to introduce to the readers of the *Journal of Central Banking Theory and Practice* the latest book by the world management guru, Mr. Isaac Adizes, published on the occasion of his 75 years of life and 50 years of work. The book was first published by the Adizes Institute, the USA, titled “Food for Thought”, and the Serbian translation of the book was published by the ASEE (Adizes South East Europe) from Novi Sad. The book title in Serbian is very effective – MISLI (“Thoughts”) - because it contains the most brilliant thoughts written or spoken by professor Adizes on different occasions. It was hard to find a more qualified and experienced person to mark the path that people and organizations should walk in these turbulent and crisis times of accelerated changes. In numerous books published this year alone, and who knows how many scientific papers in recent years and decades, professor Adizes convincingly shows that life - as the trinity of heart, soul and mind – is an uncertain journey. “Life is a change”, as emphasized in this book “and you must anticipate and react faster than change in order to survive.”

Although no one can know one organization better than the people working in it, professor Adizes believes that the

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<sup>1</sup> “Food for Thought”, Ichak Kalderon Adizes, Adizes Institute, Santa Barbara, California, USA, 2012

main problem does not lie in the people, but in the system that is stronger than the people. Why? Whenever you have a system, as pointed by professor Adizes, you have a set of subsystems that make up the system, as a rule. When there is a change, subsystems do not change synchronously. Some are changing faster than the others, which leads to disintegration that manifests itself in what we call “problems”. If we fail to tackle disintegration as soon as possible, the problems grow into a crisis.

All problems, warns professor Adizes - be they medical, emotional, organizational, physical, social or political - are manifestations of a disintegration caused by a change. If the cause of all problems is disintegration, then it follows, says Professor Adizes, that the solution to all problems is integration. The more the problems, the more solutions are needed. Do not use short term solutions to the problem nor long-term solutions to a short term problem, advises professor Adizes. But how should we look at the problem objectively? In order to objectively look at the problem, you must “step outside the box” because you cannot see the picture when you are “in the box”. Distance yourself from the image to see it from a different perspective. “Stepping back” from the image will allow you to see the value or the futility of what you are doing. What is the difference between intelligent and wise people, ponders professor Adizes in his book – it in that the intelligent people know how to solve the problem, and the wise know how not to fall into problems in the first place.

His scientific methodology for managing organizational change which is based on mutual trust and respect has been successfully implemented in many organizations around the world and increasingly in our country.

Professor Adizes claims to have discovered the secret of success of any system. This secret allows him, to say in his own words, “to predict whether a marriage, a state or a manager are on their way to success.” The success of any system, regardless of it being a micro or macro system and whether it is an individual, a family, an organization or a society, can be predicted, as he says, using one and only one factor alone: the relationship between external and internal integration (dis)integration. External integration is defined as the amount of resources that an organization invests in identifying and meeting the needs of clients. Internal (dis)integration is measured by the amount of scattered energy in management miscommunication, internal friction, internal frictions, internal policy and distrust instead of using it within the organization to achieve goals. Internal (dis) integration measures the existence and/or absence of mutual trust and respect in the organizational culture. If there is little mutual trust and respect or it is completely lacking, the energy spent on internal (dis)integration will be very large.

The science tells us that every system has the constant amount of energy at any given time. Professor Adizes found that an organization is that constant energy distributed in a predictable way which first goes to the internal (dis)integration, while only excess energy is invested in external integration.

Bearing this in mind, professor Adizes rightfully begs the question here and in almost all of his other recent books - where is the key to success of an organization in these turbulent and crisis times which is characterized not only by unreliable environment and ever increasing pace of change, but also by many unpredictable external and internal influences, with numerous risks that have become hard to control? The challenges we face today and that we will be facing even more in the future call for new approaches, new answers and new solutions. Therefore, the key to managerial success lies in synergy and building of a complementary team. Successful organizations are, as accentuated by professor Adizes, products of complementary teams. A culture of a nation takes a special place there. Creating a culture in which internal conflicts can be resolved constructively leads to reducing internal (dis)integration to a minimum, allowing all participants in the process to focus their energy on the wellbeing of those for which they exist in the first place - customers, that is, users of products and services. The same goes not only for organizations but entire nations and countries as well.

Therefore, if you want to achieve a sustainable success, you need to build your own system of success. A system is alive only if it has the energy. Where does this energy come from? From the people who make up the organization. That is the reason, says professor Adizes, why managers look for people who are vigorous, passionate and dedicated to work. Every organization is a system that needs energy in order to function. If the energy is not flowing freely, the system remains with much less energy available for work. When there is no mutual trust and respect, it is as if the flow of energy encountered obstacles - the organization is poorly supplied with energy, which puts it in an inferior competitive position. The more mutual trust and respect, the more energy is available. And do not hesitate, advises professor Adizes in his book, *to always start with mutual trust and respect, both in life and work*. You will definitely not regret it. You may not always succeed at first - but do not despair. Success is not measured by how rarely you fall, but how many times you get up. This is the wisdom of survival.

There are not many people today for whom wisdom is the life philosophy. In his numerous books professor Adizes tries to follow that path, which is not easy because the digital world, as he argues, has both cleared and blurred people's vision. Even in ancient times, it was not easy for the wise to find the path of wisdom. Confucius, one of the greatest sages of all times, has defined three main paths to

learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest. Although we usually do not live the way we want but how we can and how we must – a man's life is shaped by his thinking. There is nothing so powerful to lift a man's spirit as a powerful and deep thought. For many years of friendship with professor Adizes I myself was personally convinced of this.

Even the ancient Greek philosophers believed that life is a philosophical category, and that the pinnacle of life is the thinking about life. If so, and it is, we can say that professor Adizes's life (and thought) is at its peak. And what can we say about the professor's rich and half-century long life and scientific experience? Maybe the right answer had been given by the universal genius and author of the famous Mona Lisa, Leonardo da Vinci, who claimed that wisdom is "the daughter of experience."

Where do a man's deep thoughts come from? From his intellectual being, education, culture he comes from or from his experience. We would not be much wrong to say - from all of this together? However, there is something missing. Remember the old wisdom saying great thoughts come from the heart. Even the Bible says that speech is "a spark to move our heart."

Trust no thought which contradicts your heart, advises professor Adizes in his book. And he adds - if the problem is the head, the solution is in the heart. And if it is a problem of the heart, use your head. And decision-making, considers professor Adizes, should begin with the heart (to consider whether you are really interested in the topic), continue with the brain (logical, cold-hearted analysis) and finish with the heart (whether you are at peace with your decision). But, my dear ones, warns professor Adizes, the heart speaks only when there is silence. You have to quiet your mind to give your heart the time and space to talk. When you decide with your heart, you cannot go wrong. Just in case, do not forget to do what it is up to you - and to do the best you can.

To be honest, we cannot be best in everything - but we can all be better than we are. Theoretically, that is what we all strive, but it is different in practice - the good are the most powerless, the most powerful are the least kind, the wise sometimes lack love, and those who love do not care much about wisdom. Well, it all depends on one's own perspective and what they find most important in their life. For professor Adizes, a success, for example, is getting what you want and happiness is wanting what you have. You can repeat your success because you have created it, but you cannot repeat your happiness. Professor Adizes advises – work for your success, accept your happiness, but do not rely on it too much. And we need

something to fuel our inner spirituality. When we lack a spiritual focus we try to fill this void with “things”, we try to amass as greater wealth as possible. This is, however, in vain. Everybody loses the battle of acquiring enormous wealth, says professor Adizes, because this “spiritual pit” that needs to be filled lies in the chest, and it is bottomless.

Building on the professor Adizes’s thoughts about life, here are two wisdoms on wealth coming from two ends of the world. The first is native to our area and it suggests that the rich person is “the one who seeks less” and the second one is an Oriental wisdom that says: “He who knows enough is enough will always have enough.” Professor Adizes says that there is no doubt that the greatest wealth that a man can have is his health, family and good friends. He goes on to explain - if you lose your health then nothing else seems more important, if you lose your family, it’s like you died. Finally, good friends will always help you find a way out of the crisis, whatever it may be. Unfortunately, as professor Adizes notes, most things in life are appreciated only when they are gone - you do not appreciate your health until you get sick, you do not appreciate democracy until you start living in a dictatorship, and you do not appreciate love until it is gone.

While reading or listening to these thoughts of professor Adizes, it seems that you already knew all this. But it is only as long as the book cover is not closed or the echo of the spoken thoughts permeates the room you are in. It is an old wisdom that says that deep thoughts seem so simple that it seems as if they were our own. And this is not easy to achieve. Is it? Professor Adizes has not only planetary experience, but also the planetary knowledge. And knowledge is as swimming upstream – if you stop for a moment, you are taken back. Knowledge is a treasure that follows its owner everywhere. Professor Adizes carries this knowledge with him wherever he goes. He cannot lose it and nobody can take it away from him, and he did us a great honour by sharing his treasure in this and many other books with thousands and thousands of his loyal readers around the world.

Dear readers, it my honour to recommend a book called *Food for Thought* by the unparalleled writer, professor Isak Adizes. And I recommend not only this book but his overall opus as you will surely not regret reading it. Moreover, both this and his other books will help you manage yourself, your organization and your destiny more effectively. They will make you more powerful, more self-confident, more purposeful, more focused and more persistent in what you want to achieve. In other words, you will not only become successful in your business life, but you will be more content in your personal life.