This morning, Papa Cass talks about how tough it is to find the perfect coach in the NFL. The Browns have gone from the aw shucks Chris Palmer, to the authoritative and power hungry Butch Davis, back to the emotion deprived Romeo Crennel. Somewhere in the middle lies the perfect balance. And if the Browns pull the plug on the Romeo Experiement, they'd better take their time trying to find that guy this off-season.

All great coaches seem to have something in common: They all find the middle ground.

Somewhere between Lake Placid and Mount St. Helens lies the ideal coach. Patient enough to not rush to snap judgments, but impatient enough to not accept a plan that isn't working. Controlling enough to discipline, yet hands-off enough to let players think for themselves.

Knowledgeable enough to be a teacher, yet humble enough to realize he doesn't know everything.

Coaches like that do exist. Gregg Popovich, Jeff Fisher and, in his prime, Joe Gibbs, are perfect examples.

So why are some teams stuck on the perpetual see-saw between extremes?

The Browns have been teetering back and forth since they re-entered the league nearly eight years ago.

Chris Palmer wasn't a strong leader. He threw in the towel on his second (and last) season as coach, calling it a "runaway train." Injuries mounted, he lost his ability to inspire his players, and he was gone after posting a 5-27 record with an expansion team.

The tandem approach of Palmer and GM Dwight Clark didn't create a strong enough potion, so the Browns thought big, figuring they needed an all-knowing football guru to be the man in charge of everything. Enter Butch Davis.

Davis had some success, leading the Browns to a 7-9 record in his first season, and a 9-7 record and playoff berth in his second season. But then he started to go berserk. He systematically got rid of just about every player, coach and staffer that wasn't his find. He started to perceive others in the organization as threats, and got rid of them. Morale slipped. Discipline waned. Players got arrested. The organization spiraled out of control.

Davis was forced out, and with the bad taste of a megalomaniac still in their mouths, the Browns swayed back to the low-key side of things, getting a couple of decent, humble guys to run the show in Phil Savage and Romeo Crennel.

Not surprisingly, many of the same problems that plagued Palmer and Clark are also starting to encroach on Crennel and Savage.

Leadership is non-existent in the organization. Change is slow, if it occurs at all. No one wants to be the one to make the tough decision. There is a palpable feeling that many on the team are simply accepting their league doormat standing instead of trying to change it.

The only real difference between this regime and the Clark-Palmer days is that, unlike Clark, Savage is a good judge of talent. That will likely save his job for a while.

But while Savage has a scouting schedule to keep and planes to catch, Crennel gets to sit back here on the homefront and feel the fire under his feet intensify. He is being fingered, rightly or wrongly, as the primary reason why yet another Browns season has run aground.

The Plain Dealer's Bill Livingston wrote Monday that next weekend's game against the Ravens might be the watershed for Crennel. If the Browns put up a fight for 60 minutes, he might be able to buy himself another year. If the Browns are laughed out of Baltimore like they were laughed out of Pittsburgh, Crennel's job probably won't survive past January.

In retrospect, Crennel might have been a bad choice from the get-go. More and more, it seems like he was hired because he was the anti-Butch in personality. You won't catch Crennel polarizing the locker room or the organization on many occasions.

Unfortunately, his personality is so far in the other direction, he can't seem to inspire anything in his players, good, bad or otherwise. His unwillingness to take a stand on tough issues doesn't help.

But if Crennel goes, the Browns front office has a choice to make. They can't simply go out and hire another head coach based on the qualities the previous coach didn't have. Going out and hiring a fire-spewing, vein-popping, table thrower because he's the anti-Crennel is simply going to perpetuate the see-saw this team has been on since the hiring of Palmer.

If Crennel goes, Savage, Randy Lerner and any other relevant figures in the Browns organization have to sit down and analyze, in great detail, what this team needs in a coach. What they need strategically, what they need motivationally and what they need in terms of discipline. Then, the team leaders have to go out and find a person who matches that description as closely as possible.

It won't be easy. But maybe it would be good if the Browns didn't hire their next coach a month before the Super Bowl, as Crennel was hired nearly two years ago.

Take some time. The next coaching hire, whenever it happens, has to count for something big, or this organization is really in trouble.