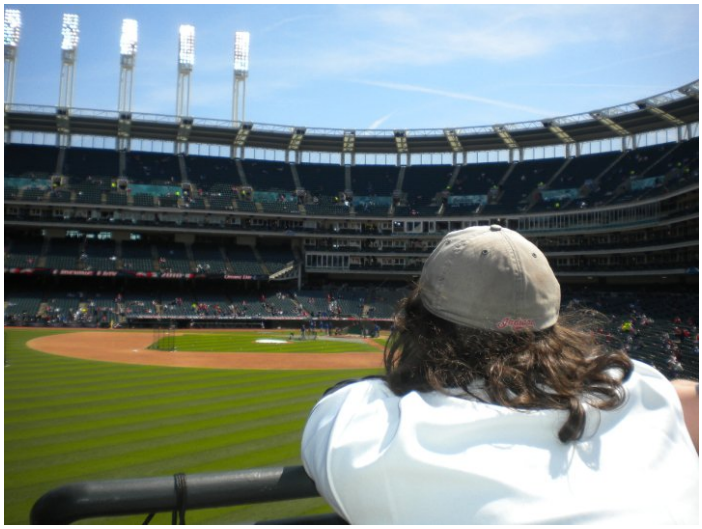

Growing up, my fiancé had a Pomeranian. It's still an adorable little ball of fur that doesn't understand its status as an ankle-biter and tries to live like a hound dog with her parents in Florida. Obviously named by a female, Pixie enjoys playing outside, treeing raccoons, and going into high-flea-traffic areas. Of course, because fleas are awful, disgusting things, the dog needs to be bathed quite often. It's not easy to bathe a six-pound dog with an entire sub-development of housing for fleas. If you don't want to shave the dog's fur off, you're basically stuck picking them off one by one. It's a tedious process. Finishing the job feels like a major accomplishment.

It takes all of about five minutes of being outside for the dog to roll around in dirt, saunter through the woods, and get covered with fleas yet again. Every painstaking moment of that dog doing what dogs do is soul-crushing. Several minutes, possibly hours, of work go down the drain in a flash. What was clean five minutes ago is back to square one.

That is what it feels like to watch an Indians game right now. A frustrating waste of time.

For the past week, I've spent some time re-evaluating how I feel about the organization. I'll still remain a die hard fan and continue to watch far more games than I bypass. There's only so much that any fan can take, especially one who has been a front office apologist and tried, in vain, to explain to numerous people why the Indians can't go out and buy expensive things in free agency or throw contract extensions around like they're using Monopoly money. I've been that guy for a long time and I'm getting tired of it.

Being an Indians fan is like moving a couch to an upstairs apartment. Not only is it a pain in the ass to maneuver the couch around and contort your body in more ways than a Cirque du Soleil performer just to get them damn thing into the stairwell, but every time you move just a bit closer, the couch falls two or three steps back towards you. Moving, in and of itself, sucks enough without unforeseen difficulties and smashed and bloodied fingers. That's what the Indians have been dealing with for a while.

Sometimes, you’re able to wedge the couch in the stairwell while you determine your plan of attack. What you’re doing isn’t working, so you keep the couch in place until you figure it out. That would describe 2011 and first half of 2012. Unfortunately, the couch gave way and is hurdling towards you at the bottom of the steps.

The immediate reaction is to just say “f*ck it” and leave the couch at the bottom of the steps and just walk away. Of course, that leaves you sitting on the floor in your apartment or going out and buying some cheap futon that you’ll have to put together once you carry the box and mattress upstairs. It’s not going to be anywhere near as comfortable as your couch, but at least it’s something.

There will come a time when you successfuly get all the way to the top, only to find out that the couch won't fit through the door frame. We'll call that 2007.

The events of this past week have really taken a toll on my Indians fandom. The losing streak doesn’t bother me as much as the apathy and short-sightedness of the trade deadline. The Indians weren’t equipped to stay in this race unless everyone else allowed them to. The roster isn’t nearly good enough, specifically the pitching staff, and there are too many holes. This seven-game losing streak is the Indians run of good luck early in the season finally catching up with them.

What kills me is that the front office is trying to wedge their couch in the stairwell, walk away from it for a couple of years, and hope it’s still sitting there when they come back. By not selling or buying, by not doing anything, they’re going to be in this exact same spot next season. Stuck somewhere between faux-contender and seller. That’s not the way to succeed in this market. No matter how unpopular it would have been, they needed to sell and sell hard.

There's no help in the top levels of the minors. There may be some replacement-level position players, possibly one or two who develop over that, and a couple worthwhile bullpen arms, but no help is coming from below for the foreseeable future. The way to counteract that was to trade what they currently have to rebuild the system's top talent. Shin-Soo Choo had to be traded. Chris Perez had to be traded. Joe Smith had to be traded. Any of the offseason signings or bench players had to be traded. There may not have been a market out there for some players, but they're not doing any good in Cleveland.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. That's what Benjamin Franklin said. That's what the Indians keep doing. They keep putting together a mediocre team and hoping it excels enough to get over the hump. There is one way to build a team in this market and one way only. Draft, develop, trade, draft, develop, trade. You're bound to have the right nucleus of players at some point that are young, controlled, and good enough to compete. The Indians *say* that's their plan, but it's never done correctly. Mostly because their drafts have been mediocre to awful for the last decade. The last couple have been better, and that's a step in the right direction...

However, the last couple drafts feature players that aren't really helping the Indians anytime soon. They've drafted high upside high school pitchers, Francisco Lindor who is a tremendously gifted prospect but a good 3-4 years from the Majors now, and he was drafted last year, and others who will take their time getting here.

The only option was to sell and take a leap of faith. Why is it that the Indians can take a leap of faith on Ubaldo Jimenez, a regressing pitcher with one dominant first half of a season, but not trade Choo or Perez for young talent that could blossom into stars? They want fans to take a leap of faith and buy tickets and place their trust in a front office group that has nothing to show for eight of the 10 years of this rebuild process.

What this week has shown me is that the Indians don't have a clear plan in mind and that we have no reason to trust that they ever will. By standing pat at the trade deadline, they've accepted mediocrity. As someone who has gone to probably 200 games over the last six years, I don't want to accept mediocrity. I want to see results. I want to see a winner.

Right now, all the Indians are doing is playing a good wingman to the Browns through the sale to Jimmy Haslam and the anticipation for seeing the retooled offense. The Indians went into

their tailspin right as the Browns needed it most. They're irrelevant by the first Browns preseason game yet again and then they'll wonder why they're playing in front of 2500 people announced as a crowd of over 10,000.

The culture of change comes when you take the gamble to do something differently. Until the Indians do that, there won't be a change on the field, in the stands, or in the standings.