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## Did Saban make a judgment error? What stress and pressure can do to any leader

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With five national championships under his belt and numerous other accomplishments, questioning Alabama head football coach Nick Saban's judgment should rightfully cause you to question mine.

Leading up to the championship game, Saban's reportedly rocky relationship with offensive coordinator Lane Kiffin boiled over. The result was that one week prior to the big game, a "mutual" parting of the ways occurred.

Saban made a tough call at a tough time. Saban exercised judgment. The question is, was it good judgment?

More than 50 years ago, Robert S. Hartman developed the Hartman Value Profile, a tool that is useful in assessing the many facets of judgment.

Hartman said the top two derailers of good judgment were stress and frustration. Can there be a more stressful time for a football coach than the week before the national championship game?

Kiffin had already accepted a job at another school. The offense hadn't performed up to par the prior week. Could Saban's frustration level have finally reached the boiling point?

Could the combination of the two have distorted Saban's judgment as to how and when to send Kiffin packing?

We develop our judgment by default or design. The former is the result of years of subconscious factors that shape the values from whence our judgment comes. The latter is a conscious effort on our part to acknowledge those influences and overcome them.

Ask yourself these three questions:

Am I systemic in my thinking — do I look for the big picture impact of my decisions?

Am I deliberative — do I pause, even for a moment, before I speak or act?

When I am stressed — do I "feel" the moment surrounding me, and can I escape it just long enough to make the most unemotional decision possible?

Practicing just those three steps can make a tremendous improvement in your judgment over time.

So did Saban cost his team a championship? We'll never know. A leader with Saban's track record deserves the benefit of the doubt by a large margin.

What I do know is that leaders of all stripes constantly assess their own behavior, at the most critical moments, to see how they can improve.

How about you? Try working on judgment by design and see if you can increase your odds of making the right judgment at the right time.



NOLA LALEYE

Nick Saban, Alabama head coach, on the sidelines.