It often takes time for the full effect of traumatic events to set in. At first, we’re just so relieved to get past the initial pain and stress of the ordeal that we pay little attention to the possibility of future problems. We simply let it go and focus on other things in an effort to move on with our lives.

Recently, the Texas Innocence Project responded with their questionnaire they wanted me to fill out and send in. This is what I’ve been striving for, the whole time in prison. Finally, somebody wants to investigate the circumstances that led to this nightmare. Without a moment’s hesitation, I dove right into answering all the questions and assembling documents for the packet I was sending in. I gave little thought to that “Pandora’s Box” I was opening up.

Reliving all the tragic events that set me on this path in the first place had an adverse effect on my psyche. The onslaught of emotions completely overwhelmed me. All of the depression, anxiety, anger, and confusion; soon had me on the verge of a panic attack. I was teetering on the brink of “crashing out,” dangerously close to having another episode. It’s time to serve to the side and tap them brakes. “COLLISION ALERT! COLLISION ALERT!”

Breathe in. Breathe out. Calm down. Currently, at this moment, at this very space in time - there is no immediate danger or catastrophe threatening me. It’s “all in my head.” Literally. That’s just how strong our brain is. Memories can trigger powerful responses in our autonomous nervous system. That’s why I’ll never understand people’s MALICE, DECEIT, and TREACHERY. Nothing good EVER comes from it. “They” don’t care about who they hurt or how many lives they ruin. As long as they get what they want.

Brian Fuller