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Sometimes we experience subtle clues, with observations that seem to be totally unrelated, but later fall into place like a magnet that magically pulls the pieces together into a beautiful pattern. Sometimes, though, the realization slaps someone right in the face – and sometimes it's right under our noses, but it takes days, weeks, or even years for us to recognize it.

Recently, I've had numerous experiences that seemed totally unrelated – until this past week.

Last month, I participated in a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) course for a couple of days in Bryan, with many others of various backgrounds. Some were law enforcement, firefighters, school counselors, volunteers, local government workers, state agency employees, and others. Some had formal psychological training, some had counseling experience, some had disaster experience, and some had all. We were gathered there to train together to help support our responders and citizens in the event tragedy strikes our region; but not just helping physically. We were taking this step together and learning, so that we may choose to work together on a regional CISM team – helping with emotional healing.

Shortly thereafter, we all saw, watched, and listened in horror as another tragic shooting incident occurred at Fort Hood. More innocent lives were taken and more dreams shattered – one more horrific disaster. This was all too soon, after just months ago; we all were affected by the fertilizer incident in West, Texas. More tragedy, more lives lost. Another disaster. Although I personally knew no one who was a victim of either of these incidents, I can directly relate with many of them – as can you.

Now, if we pull all of these recent events together and choose to recognize the opportunity that is before us, we can then understand that all of this can come together to bring hope and healing to the victims, families, friends and responders involved.

Perhaps the message we should recognize is that each of us has the ability to help someone. Whether that be a sharing of our love, food, shelter, or abilities – we CAN help others. Perhaps you or someone you know might be interested in sharing your gifts to help others through service on the regional CISM team or through another support service that may be active in incidents or disasters. The burden is lighter when we share the load.

As always, be safe out there!
