



The More Connected We Become

On what technology accelerates, and what it cannot replace.

A perspective from The Local Epicurean

The Shift Beneath the Surface

As technology accelerates, particularly in the direction of artificial intelligence, the most valuable things are not the ones it improves. They are the ones it cannot replicate.

For most of modern business history, advantage has come from efficiency. Systems reduce variability, eliminate friction, and allow organizations to produce more with less. AI represents the most powerful version of that lever we have ever seen. It compresses time, reduces cost, and expands capability across industries at a pace that is still accelerating.

But underneath that, something more subtle is happening. As the world becomes more efficient, more digital, and more optimized, the relative value of what is not efficient, not digital, and not optimized begins to rise. Not because those things have changed, but because everything around them has. What once felt secondary — being in a room together, making something by hand — starts to feel like it matters more than most calendars allow.

What Gets Replaced

As digital experiences improve, they do not just replace bad physical experiences. **They replace average ones.**

If convenience is the primary value proposition, technology will almost always win. Transactions become seamless. Information becomes instant. Communication becomes constant, but most of it happens over email and Slack rather than across a table. Which means the generic, undifferentiated shared experience begins to erode. What remains are the things that are distinct enough, intentional enough, and human enough to justify their existence.

Most team events are designed to be enjoyed. A dinner, a happy hour, a night out — pleasant, easy, and largely forgettable. They do not ask anything of the people in them.

This is different. Consider what happens when a group of colleagues makes something together. They share a process that requires attention, a little patience, and presence. They leave with something that belongs to them in a way most evenings out do not — and often, with a slightly different sense of the people they came with. That distinction is small on paper. In the room, it changes everything.

The desire for something tangible, something shared, something that cannot be replicated over a screen does not disappear in a more digital world. In environments where most interaction is mediated by a device, it intensifies.

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What Participation Changes

What makes a shared experience memorable is not that it happened. It is that people did something in it.

When a team participates — not just attends — something shifts. People who might never interact across a conference table, or who only know each other through email threads and video calls, find themselves working side by side toward the same small goal. The stakes are low. The activity is forgiving. But the dynamic it creates is real. Shared effort, even light effort, produces a kind of ease and trust that is genuinely difficult to manufacture any other way.

Food is one of the few universal mediums where this dynamic comes naturally. Making something together carries a different weight than consuming it together. **It is optimized for presence.** Participation creates the conditions for people to see each other differently — and that shift, subtle as it is, tends to carry back into how they work together.

The Clarity That Follows

There is a clarifying effect to watching technology advance — particularly for teams whose work is increasingly digital, distributed, and screen-mediated. As processes become automated and information becomes instantaneous, what stands out is not what has been made more efficient. It is what has been preserved from efficiency altogether.

What requires a room. What requires other people. What cannot be replicated by a system that has never laughed across a table, never felt the quiet satisfaction of making something

with its hands.

These are not nostalgic ideas. They are structural ones. The more capable technology becomes at handling what should be efficient, the more it creates space to invest in what should not be. The more it compresses routine interaction, the more it amplifies the value of genuine ones.

The Bet

The opportunity is not to compete with technology on its terms. It is to invest in the spaces it leaves behind.

When you choose this kind of experience for your team, you are not planning an event. You are making a deliberate investment in something most calendars never make room for: the kind of connection that happens when people are in a room together, working toward the same thing.

“The opportunity is not to compete with technology on its terms. It is to build in the spaces it leaves behind.”

Most of what happens at work leaves no trace. A shared hour of making something does. People leave it differently than they arrived, and that difference carries back into the work.

That is the experience we create every day at The Local Epicurean.