QUESTIONS WORTH EXPLORING • AN EPOCH PERFORMANCE PERSPECTIVE

The Unexpected Value of Getting It Wrong



Original



New Version

Recently, while developing graphics for Epoch Performance, I encountered an unexpected lesson about mistakes, expectations, and possibilities.

We had already approved a particular rainbow-wave design. The next task seemed straightforward: adapt that design to fit a specific LinkedIn format.

Simple enough. Or so I thought.

As we worked through the sizing and layout, a different version of the wave appeared. It wasn't the design we'd approved. The shape and visual character had changed.

My initial reaction could easily have been, "That's wrong. Make it look like the original."

After all, we had already made that decision. Why revisit it?

But something about the new design caught my attention.

The new wave had a sense of movement, energy, and dimension. The original wave was simpler, quieter, and more settled.

Neither was necessarily better. They were simply different.

And that difference opened a possibility we hadn't considered.

Rather than choosing one and rejecting the other, we began exploring how both might serve different purposes. One could communicate movement and engagement, while the other could provide a calmer visual presence for more reflective content.

What began as an effort to correct an unexpected result became an opportunity to expand our thinking.

That experience left me considering a broader question.

How often do we reject something because it doesn't match what we expected, without first considering what it might offer?

In organizations, we establish goals, approve plans, develop processes, and agree on expectations. All those things serve important purposes.

But they can also become boundaries around our thinking.

When someone presents an idea that differs from what was approved, our first response may be to point out the difference and request a correction.

Sometimes that is exactly what's needed.

But sometimes, in our effort to get things right, we overlook an opportunity to discover something better—or simply something useful in a different way.

The unexpected result may not solve the original problem. It may, however, help us recognize a possibility we hadn't previously imagined.

Perhaps the question isn't always, "How do we fix what's wrong?"

Sometimes a more useful question might be:

"What might we discover if we explored this before dismissing it?"

We still need standards, expectations, and the ability to recognize when something doesn't work.

But we also need the curiosity to recognize when an unexpected result deserves a second look.

After all, not every mistake is a failure. And not every unexpected outcome needs to be discarded.

Sometimes the value is in what we notice along the way.

Honor your accomplishments. Celebrate your mistakes.