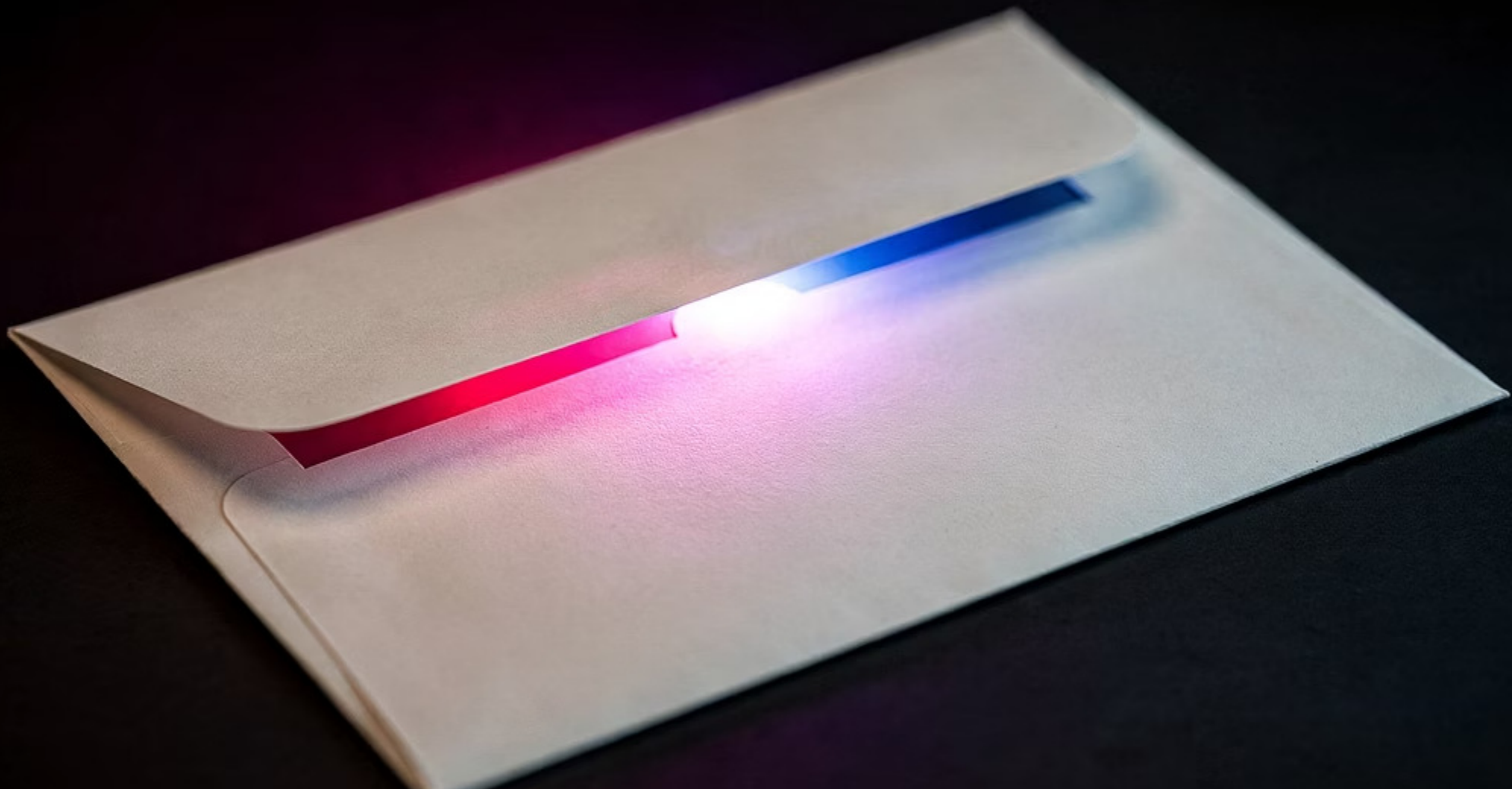




The Email That Arrived 11 Days Later

When a Standard Thank-You Becomes Something More

The incentive trip ended on a Friday. Standard thank-you email arrived Tuesday. Professional, polite. "Great job, JR. The team loved Udaipur. Invoice approved."

I filed it and moved on to the next brief.

Then 11 days later, at 11:47 p.m., my phone buzzed with an email from the same client. But this one felt different. The subject line simply said: "I need to tell you something."

I opened it.

"JR, I haven't written a personal email to a vendor in probably 15 years. But I can't stop thinking about what happened on that last evening in Udaipur, and neither can my team. You remember that unplanned conversation by the lakeside after dinner? Where we ended up talking about why we do what we do, not just what we do? Three of my underperformers from last quarter closed significant deals this week. When I asked one of them what changed, he said something that gave me goosebumps: 'I remembered what we talked about that night. How you said every rejection is just someone saying not yet, not no. I felt it again when I was about to give up on a pitch.' I honestly don't know what you engineered that evening, JR. But something shifted in us. Not just for those five days. For how we show up now."

I read it twice, then just sat there smiling in the dark of my study.

Because that email is the only ROI that actually matters in this business.



What Your Quarterly Report Doesn't Measure

The Science Behind What Actually Changes People

Here's something most people don't know about events, especially corporate ones. When we design experiences that genuinely move people, when someone feels truly seen or heard or valued, their brain releases a chemical called oxytocin. It's the same trust hormone that bonds mothers to newborns, the same response that turns colleagues into teams instead of just people sharing a Zoom link.

But here's the part that changes everything: **oxytocin doesn't clock out when everyone boards the flight home.** It embeds itself. It creates what neuroscientists call memory markers, tags in your nervous system that say "keep this, use this when it counts."

Dr. Paul Zak, who studies the neuroscience of trust, calls this phenomenon H.O.M.E., which stands for Human Oxytocin Mediated Empathy. I learned about this through a beautiful post by Roshan Abbas, and it made me realise something profound about what we actually do in this industry.

We're not in the MICE business. We're in the business of altering nervous systems in ways that change how people show up at work three months later. Most client RFPs just don't know how to ask for that.

When Everything Falls Apart and Everything Comes Together

Let me tell you about another trip, another client, another moment that taught me this lesson all over again.

We were taking 87 people on a family incentive to the USA. Spouses, kids, the whole celebration. Everything was perfectly planned, down to the seat assignments so families could sit together on the long Emirates flight.

Then Dubai happened. The connection got delayed, not by an hour or two, but by enough time that half our group made the connecting flight to San Francisco and half didn't. Husbands separated from wives. Kids from parents. The CFO's wife ended up on one flight while he was rebooked 11 hours later. Our WhatsApp group exploded with panic.

My coordinator was at the gate managing absolute chaos, rebooking tickets, consoling anxious travelers, problem-solving on his feet while I coordinated from Mumbai, both of us barely breathing.

But here's what nobody could have planned for, what no run-of-show could have scripted.

The group that got separated had to figure it out together. The junior sales executive helped the CFO's wife with her luggage, made sure she knew the hotel address, kept checking on her throughout the flight. Two mid-level managers who barely exchanged pleasantries in office meetings ended up sitting together for 14 hours and discovered they'd both left engineering careers to join sales, both had the same doubts, the same dreams. A VP who'd flown business class for 20 years found himself in economy next to a coordinator's spouse, and they talked the entire flight. He learned her daughter wanted to become a pilot, shared stories about his own daughter's struggles with career choices, became genuinely invested in this family he'd never met before.

The Reunion That Changed Everything

When everyone finally reunited at the San Francisco hotel almost 24 hours later, something had fundamentally shifted in the group. The trip hadn't officially started yet, but they were already a different kind of team.

Six months after we returned, the CEO called me. Not for another project, just to talk. He said something I'll never forget: ***"JR, that flight disaster turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to us. People saw each other as humans first, designations second. The hierarchy dissolved somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean, and it hasn't come back. We're a different company now."***

Crisis became chemistry. Chaos became real connection. You cannot program that in a proposal, but when it happens, people's bodies refuse to forget it.

What Actually Stays

Here's what I've learned after three decades and more than 2,500 events: the AV equipment gets packed up, the post-event surveys get filed, the charter flights go home, but what actually stays is how people felt in their bodies.

That sales guy who helped the CFO's wife during the flight chaos? He now gets invited to senior strategy meetings. That VP who sat in economy and connected with a stranger's family? He started a company-wide mentorship program three months later. Those separated spouses who figured out airports in foreign countries together? They reference that experience at every company gathering as the day they learned their colleagues had their backs.

The underperformers from Udaipur who became closers didn't suddenly learn new sales techniques. Their bodies just remembered what it felt like to matter beyond their quarterly numbers, and they carried that feeling into every difficult client conversation.

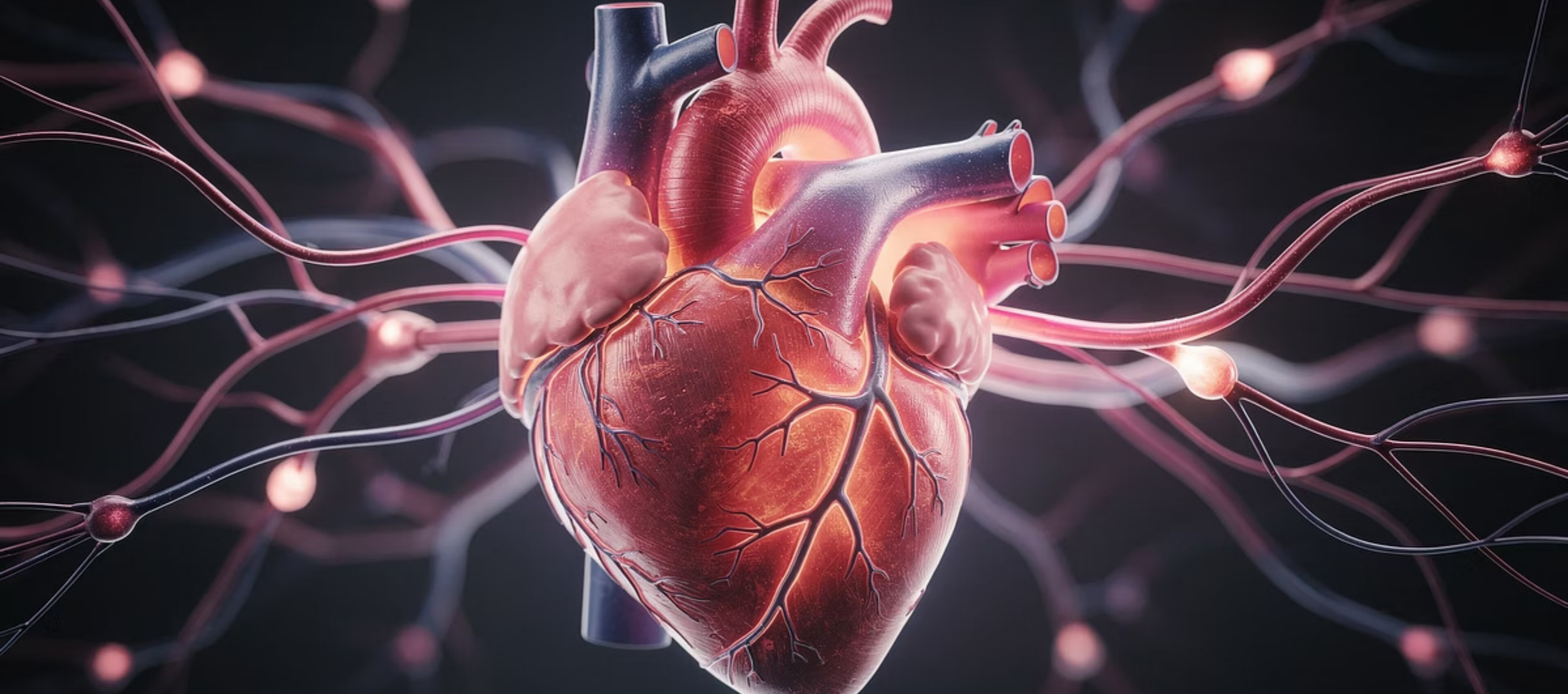
This is what we're actually building in the events business. Not Instagram-worthy backdrops or flawlessly executed itineraries, though those matter too. We're building experiences that leave ghost lights burning in people's nervous systems long after the last session ends.

Before You Write Your Next Proposal

So here's what I ask myself now before every pitch, every creative concept, every run-of-show: Am I designing for perfection or am I designing for chemistry? Will someone's body refuse to let this experience go? Will it change how they show up at work, at home, in their lives three months from now?

Because the magic isn't always in flawless execution. Sometimes the most transformative moments happen when things fall apart and people discover what they're capable of together. Sometimes it's an unplanned conversation by a lake that gives someone the courage to hear "not yet" instead of "no." Sometimes it's 14 hours in an airplane when hierarchy dissolves and humans just see each other.

That CEO who emailed me at 11:47 p.m. eleven days after his trip ended, who hasn't written a personal note to a vendor in 15 years? That's not just a testimonial. **That's a standing ovation from someone's nervous system,** telling you that what you created is still living in their body, still changing how they lead, still printing returns your invoice could never capture.



***Its not about the
destination ,
Its about the
mind, body and
heart.***