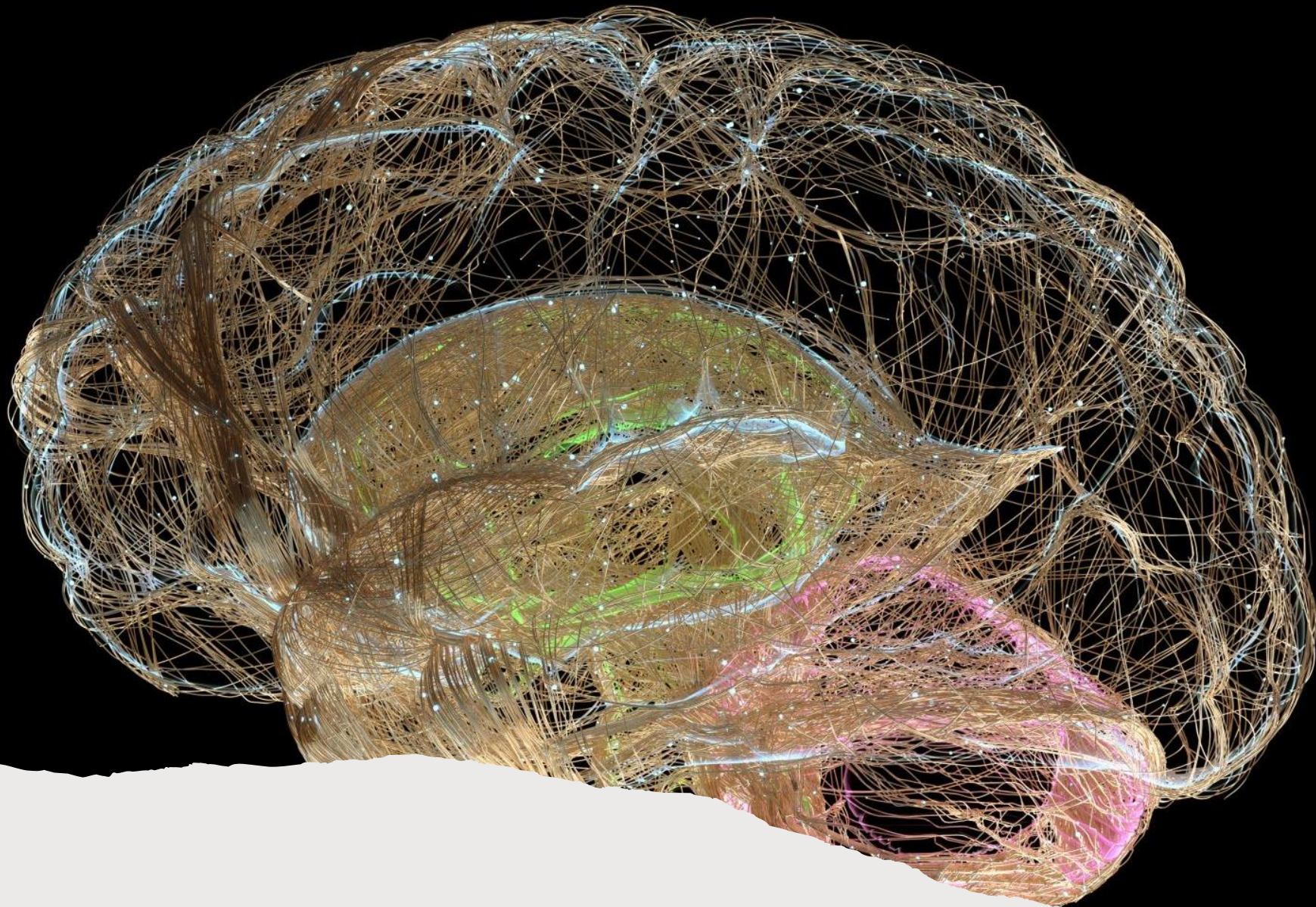


# Autism in Tech

@DennieDeclercq // 2023 // AGILE Testing Days





Intro



# Dennie

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# Content

> Intro

> Executive Functioning in Tech

> Brain-Response Time in Tech

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> Communication in Tech

> Outro

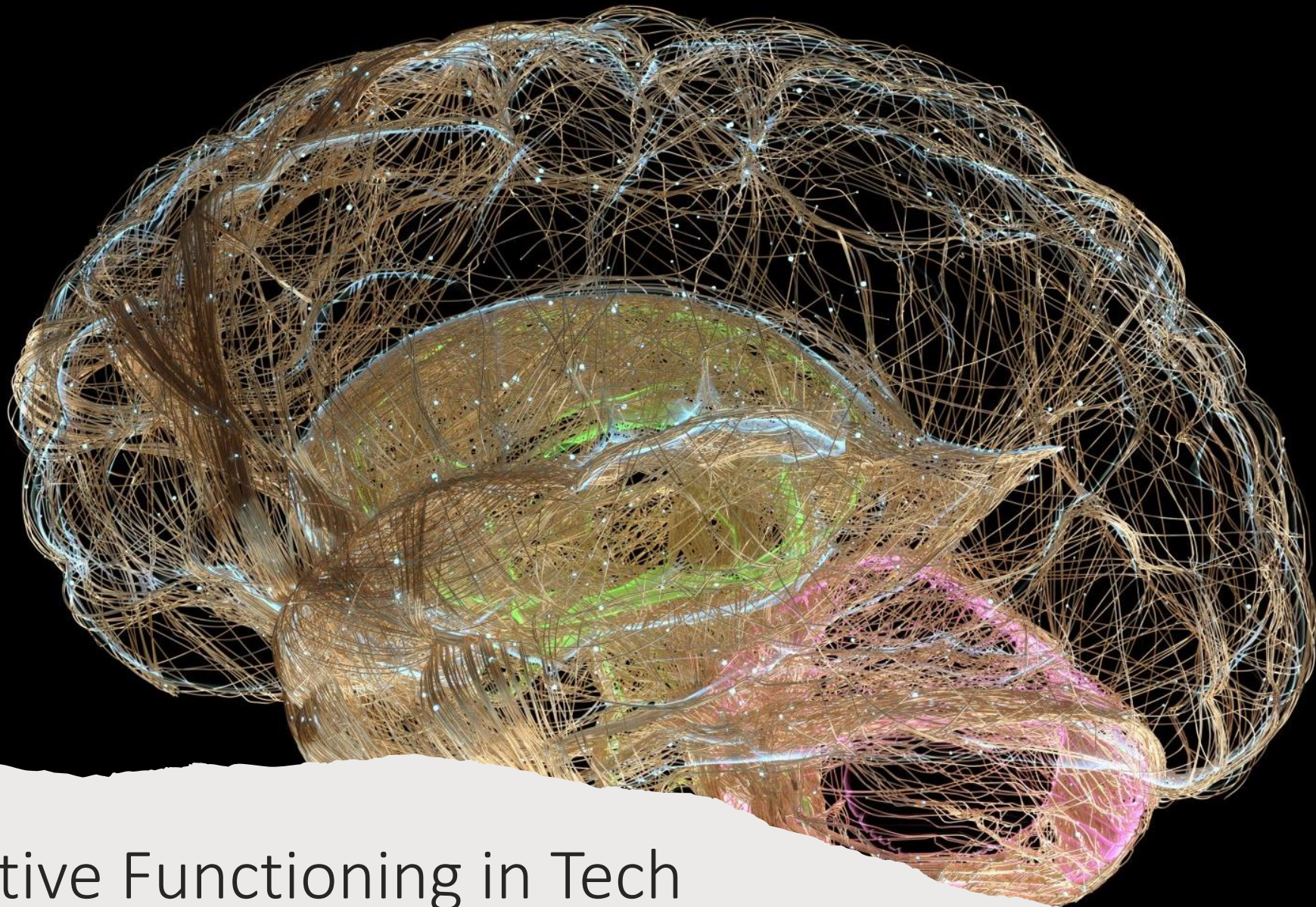


# Reminder: It's a spectrum after all

- > ASP: Autism Spectrum Profile
- > ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - > Is A difference a disorder?
  - > Disorder is stigma
  - > Disorder is linked to malfunctioning
- > If (environment == AutismFriendly)=>
  - \_ Autism = **Supertalent**
- > **AutismFriendly** == True If =>
  - (Listen, Adjust, Adapt, Empathy, Uniqueness) = True







Executive Functioning in Tech

# Executive Functioning

- > Daily living and working activities
- > (Public) transportation
- > Cooking
- > Doing Groceries
- > Your BFF's Birthday party and/ or gift
- > Laundry & Household



# Planning/ Structure

- > Which tools are needed?
- > Which resources are needed?
- > How many hours are needed?
- > Is there a sequential order?
  - > (By different teams/ co-workers)



## What can help?

- (Printed/ Digital)
  - Scheme's
  - Organigram
  - Availability scheme's
- Reports of previous projects
- Mentoring





# Estimating

- > How long will X take?
- > How much will this cost?
  - > For the business
  - > For myself
- > Are there consequences?
  - > How big?
- > Which technology?
  - > Clarify: “The right tool for the right job?”



## What can help?

- Mentoring
- Team Lead with autism knowledge
- Take time to play with different technologies
- “The proof of the pudding is in the eating”





Brain – Response Time in Tech



# Slower Brain – Response time

- > The time it takes to change thoughts or plans
- > Difficulties with “other” ideas
- > Handling positive and negative “surprises”



# Thinking takes Time

- > Time to get into Focus Zone/ Flow State
- > Longer thinking, often deeper thinking
- > 10X Steps before on possible consequences



## What can help?

- Give time
- Try to limit interruptions
- Appreciate quality over quantity
- Use it!





# Unexpected questions and demands

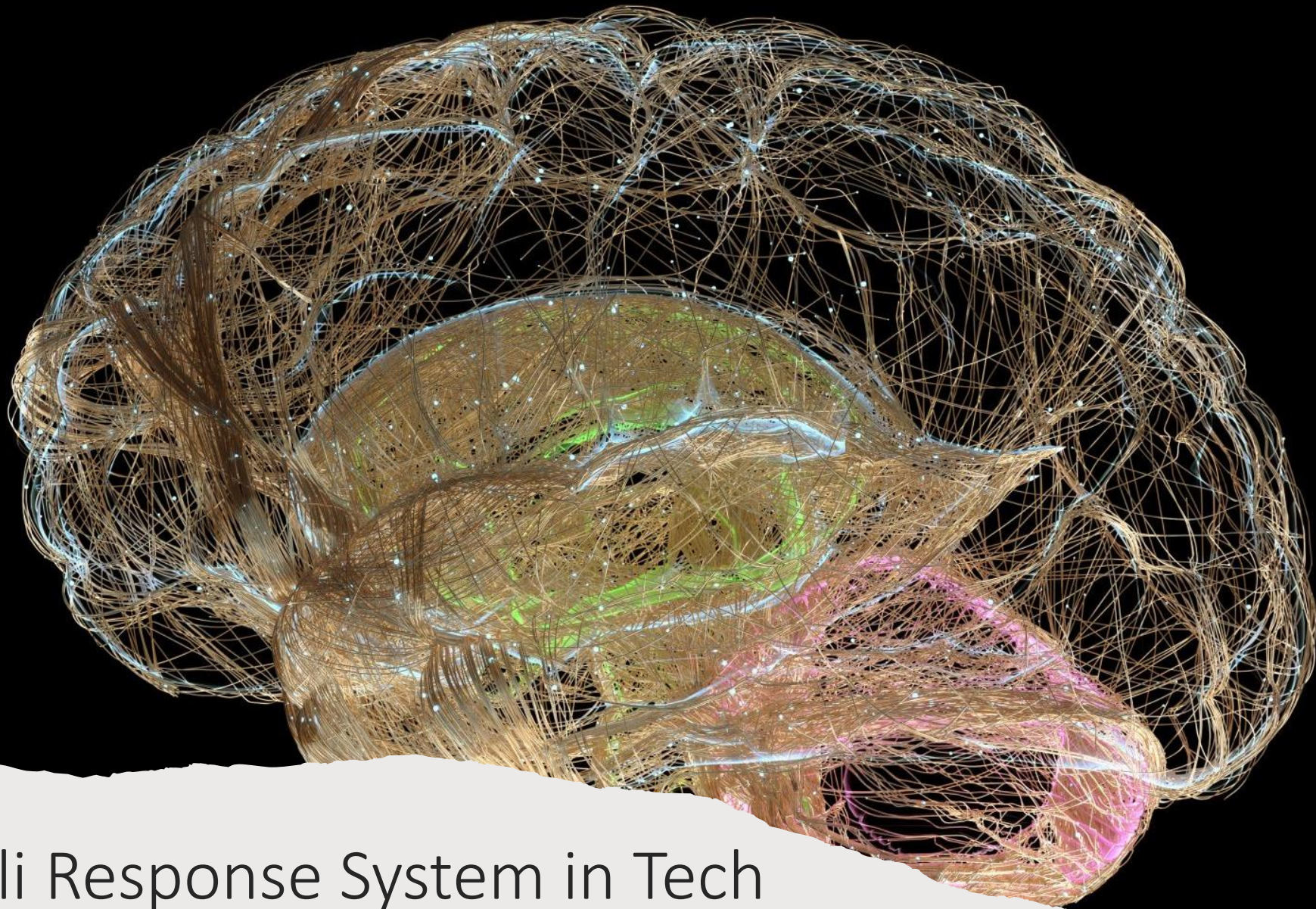


- > Can lead to FREEZE
- > Can lead to absence
- > “Not knowing what to answer”
- > “Answers I’d better never gave”
- > Unexpected Q on prices and permissions are a shame

## What can help?

- Be patient
- Give more info than needed
- Protect against misuse without stigmatizing





Stimuli Response System in Tech



# Stimuli – Response system

- > Difficult functioning in case of disbalance
- > Overwhelmed by (external) stimuli
  - \_Hyper
- > Lack of (external) stimuli
  - \_Hypo



# Voice & Noise

## Hyper

- > Solo-work on projects is a WIN
- > Most of the time speaks silent
- > Less conversations
- > Hard to ask questions



## Hypo

- > Meetings and 1-MANY projects are WIN
- > Most of the time speaks loud
- > Talks a lot
- > Asks questions (mostly) often





# Movement & Distraction



## Hyper

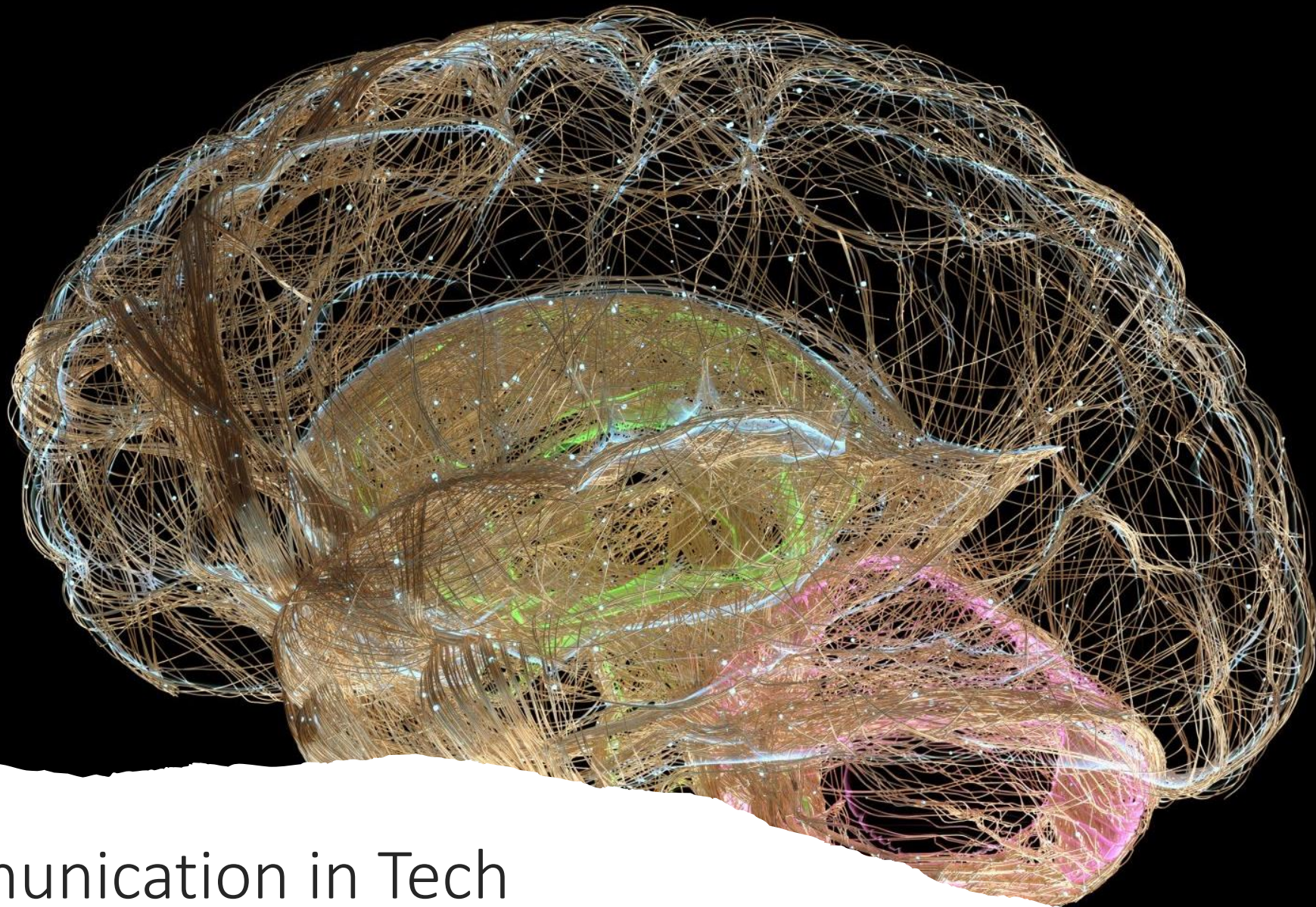
- > Better focus being alone in office
- > Working from home is a WIN
- > Distractions causes stress



## Hypo

- > Landscape offices are a WIN
- > Working alone can trigger boredom
- > Distractions causes 'too much talking'





Communication in Tech

# Communication

- > Verbal and nonverbal communication
- > Spoken and written communication
- > Limits and borders of the other
- > Clarity and clearness





# Mail, Phone or Videocall

- > Written text (mail, app-services) can come “hard”
- > Phone calls can feel uncomfortable
- > Who talks to who?
- > Which is the conversation starter?

## What can help?

- Plan phone calls
  - (ex. Dennie’s dad)
- Text before calling
- Listen if conversation start with a “word storm”
- Video calls can be a win.
  - But focus on nonverbal comm.



# Too strict, too vague or just good



## > How much info is needed?

- > About a project
- > About a customer
- > About your own (mental) state?
- > About the software stack - choices

## > How much info you share?

## > As a ASP person:

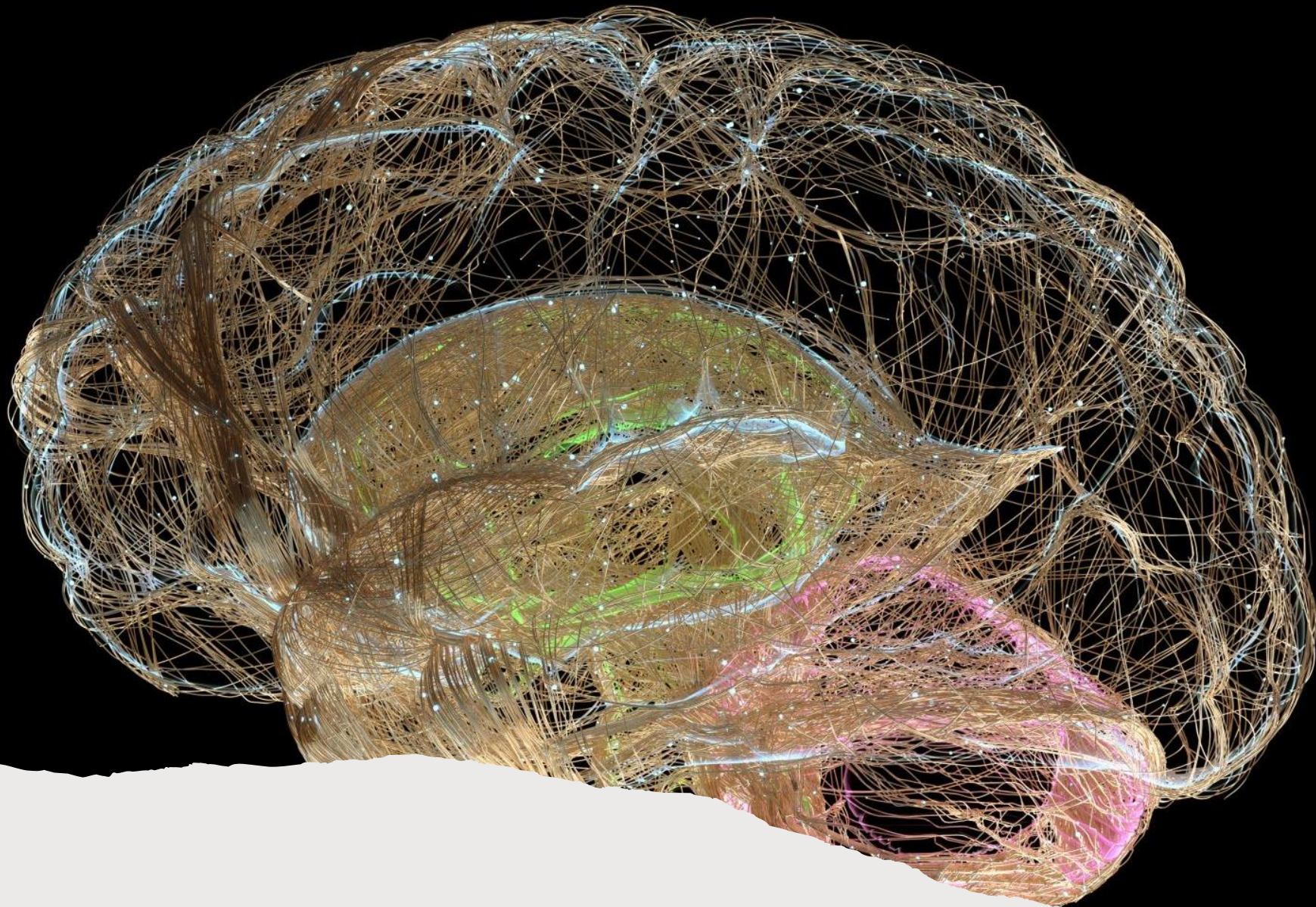
- > Do you dare to ask help, assistance clarity

## What can help?

- Be clear and consistent
- Reasoning is very important
- If ASP person asks 'strange details' => don't be surprised







Outro

# Recap

- > We talked about autism in Tech (roles)

- > Executive Functioning
- > Stimuli-response system
- > Brain-response time
- > Communication

- > Explanation, individual approach, taking time, indicating borders – limits – and choices have a big impact





# Thanks // Q&A

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