Autism in Tech
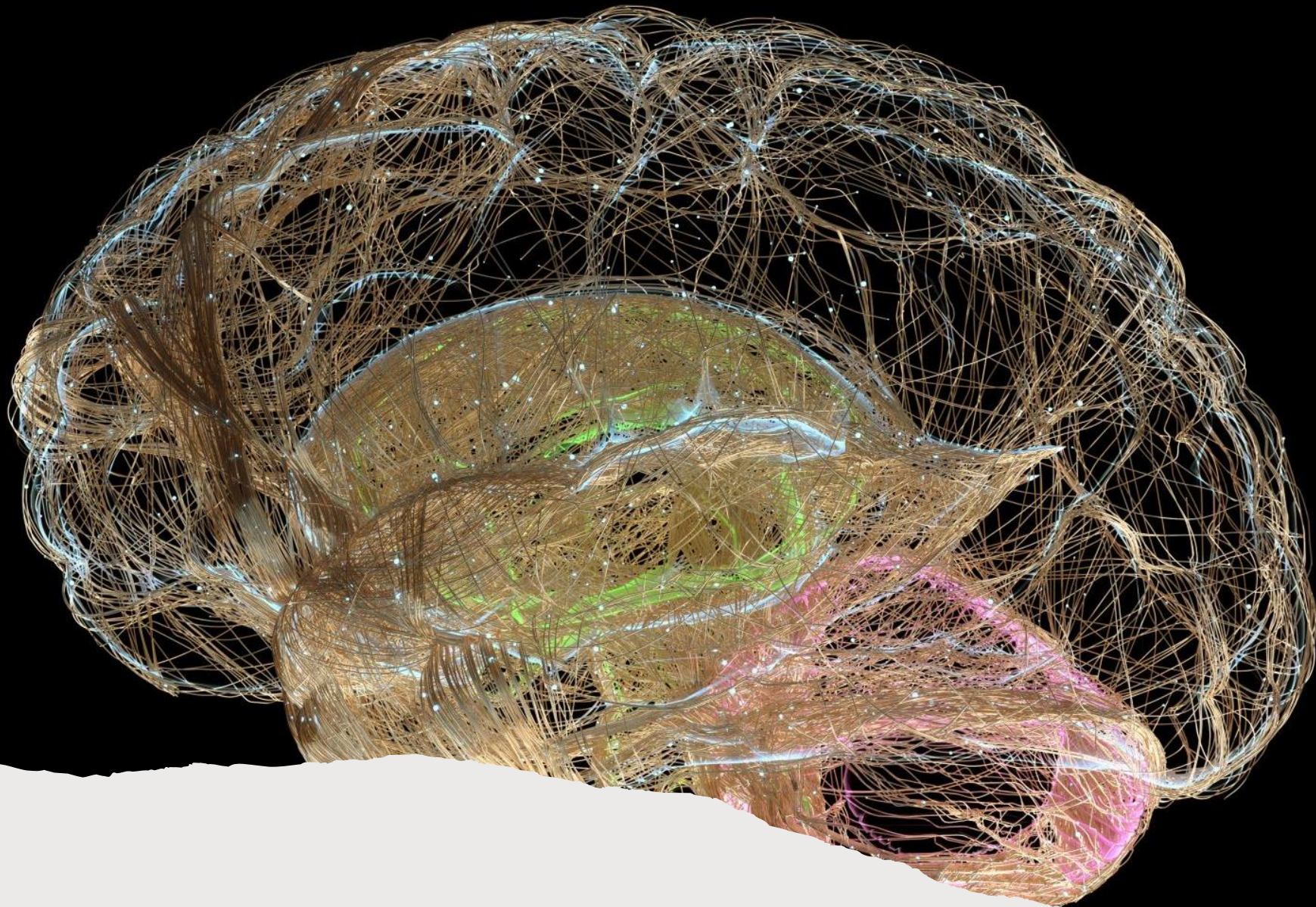
@DennieDeclercq // 2023 // AGILE Testing Days

Intro

Dennie

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>Dennie Declercq
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>#DreamingIsBelieving
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Content

Reminder: It's a spectrum after all

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> ASP: Autism Spectrum Profile
> ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder
    > Is A difference a disorder?
    > Disorder is stigma
    > Disorder is linked to misfunctioning
> 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

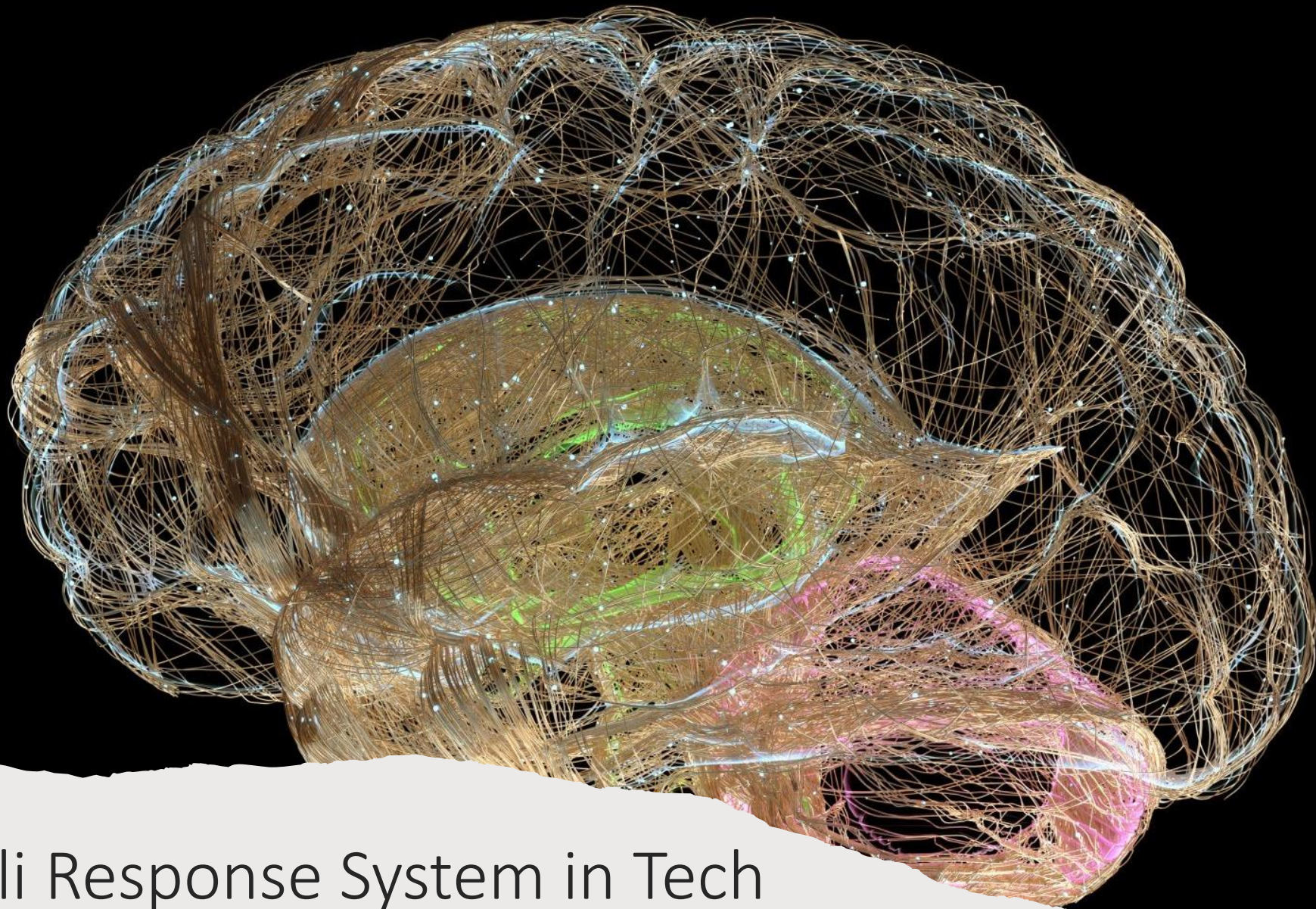➢Appreciate quality over quantity

➢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

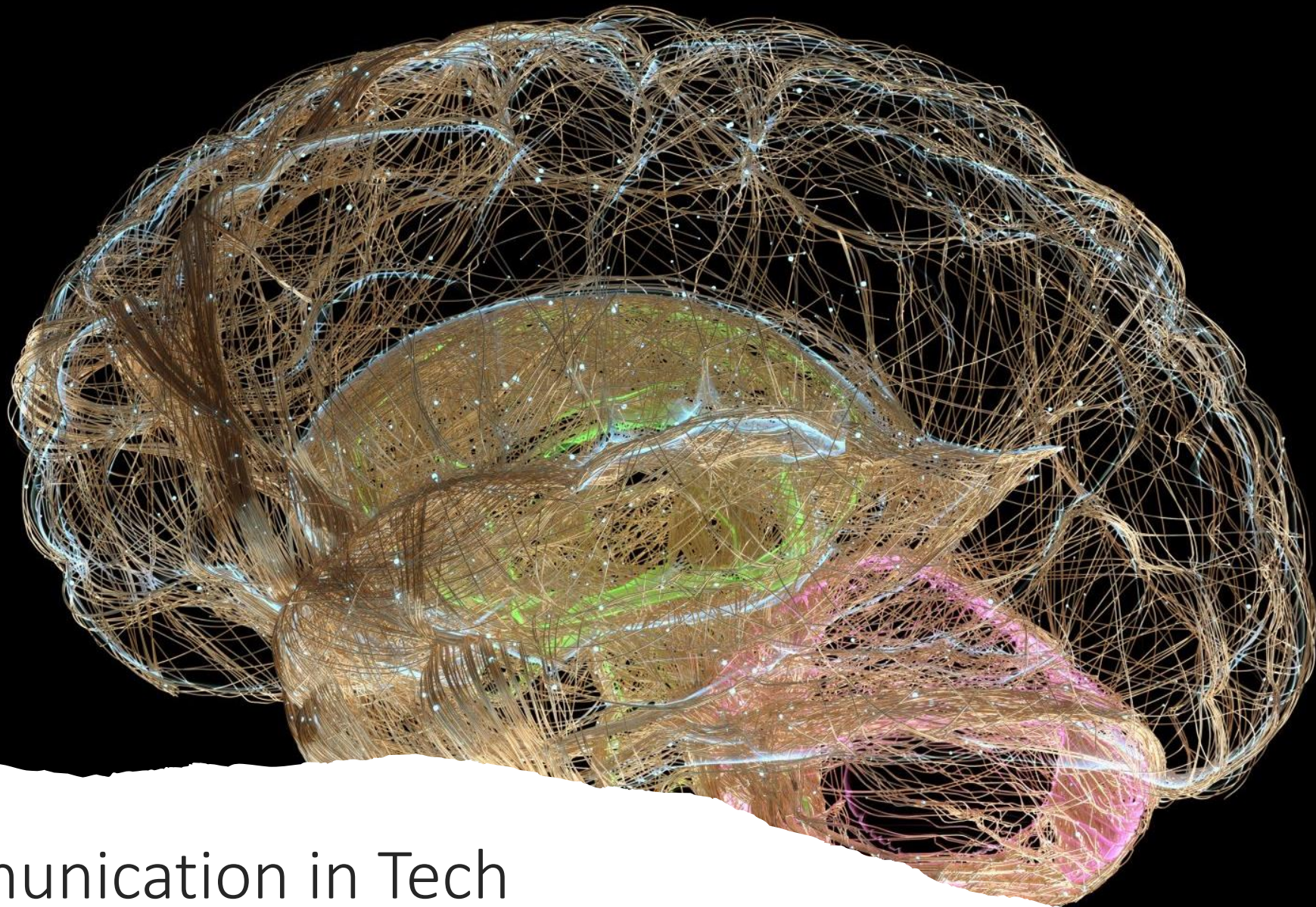> Asks questions (mostly) often

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
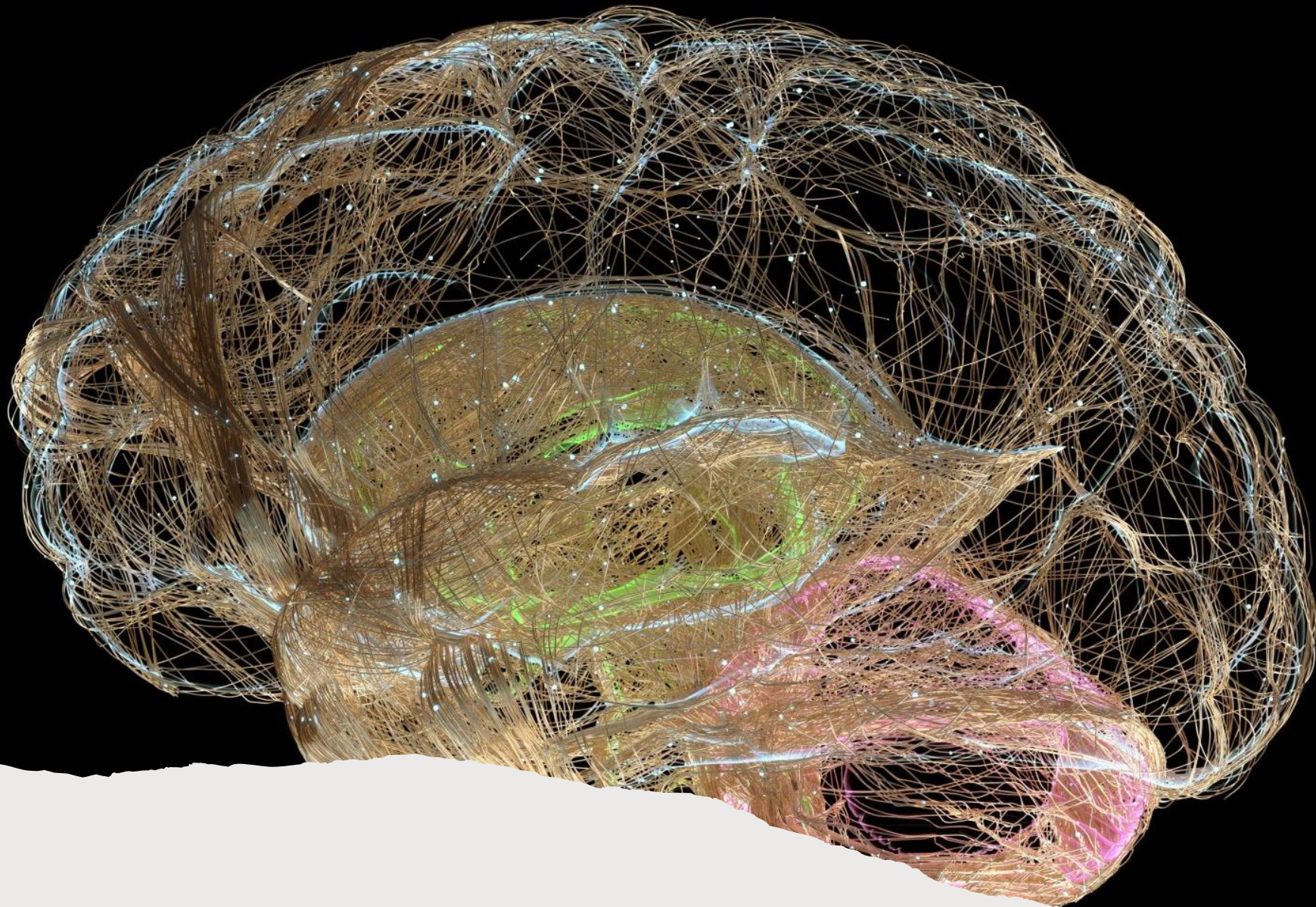
> How much info you share?

> 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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