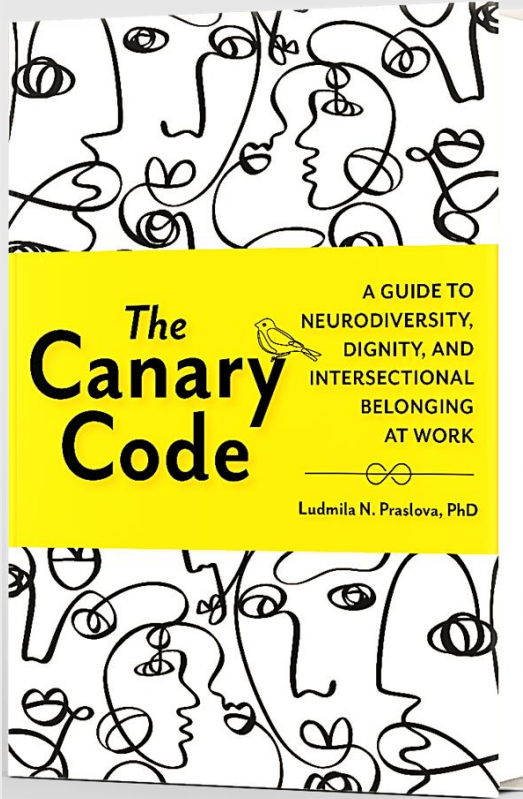


Neuroaffirming Coaching: Unveiling Possibilities

Ludmila N. Praslova, Ph.D., SHRM-SCP



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- **Ludmila N. Praslova, Ph.D., SHRM-SCP**, organizational culture, (neuro)inclusion, and future-of-work.
- Professor, Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Vanguard University of Southern California
- **The CANARY CODE: A Guide to NEURODIVERSITY, Dignity, and Intersectional Belonging at Work** (Berrett-Koehler, 2024)
- Consulting: Support creating talent-rich organizations.
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ludmila-praslova/>



Canaries in coal mines



Humans do not fit in boxes

Terminology:

- **Neurodiversity:** The range of natural diversity in human neurodevelopment (Singer, 1998, Blume, 1998).
- **Neuronormative:** Ideals & actions seen as “normal” by cultural & societal standards.
- **Neurotypical:** Person/people who ‘fit’ the idea of “neuronormative.”
- **Neurodivergent:** Person/people who ‘diverge’ from “neuronormative” (e.g. a group of autistic people is a group of ‘neurodivergent’ people). Specific individuals can also be autistic, dyslexic, etc.
- **Neurodiverse:** A collective term for groups including mixed neurotypes.
- **Neurominority:** People who share a similar form of neurodivergence inseparable from who they are, and experience some degree of prejudice or disadvantage.

Key perspectives on human differences:

Pathology Model

Deficit

Located within individual

Should be treated/changed/made to fit in

Neurodiversity Paradigm

Difference

Socially included or excluded

Acceptance/Strengths/Support



Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general.

– Harvey Blume

Diversity Within Diversity:

Giftedness

Autism

Tourette's

Learning Differences

Dyslexia

NVLD

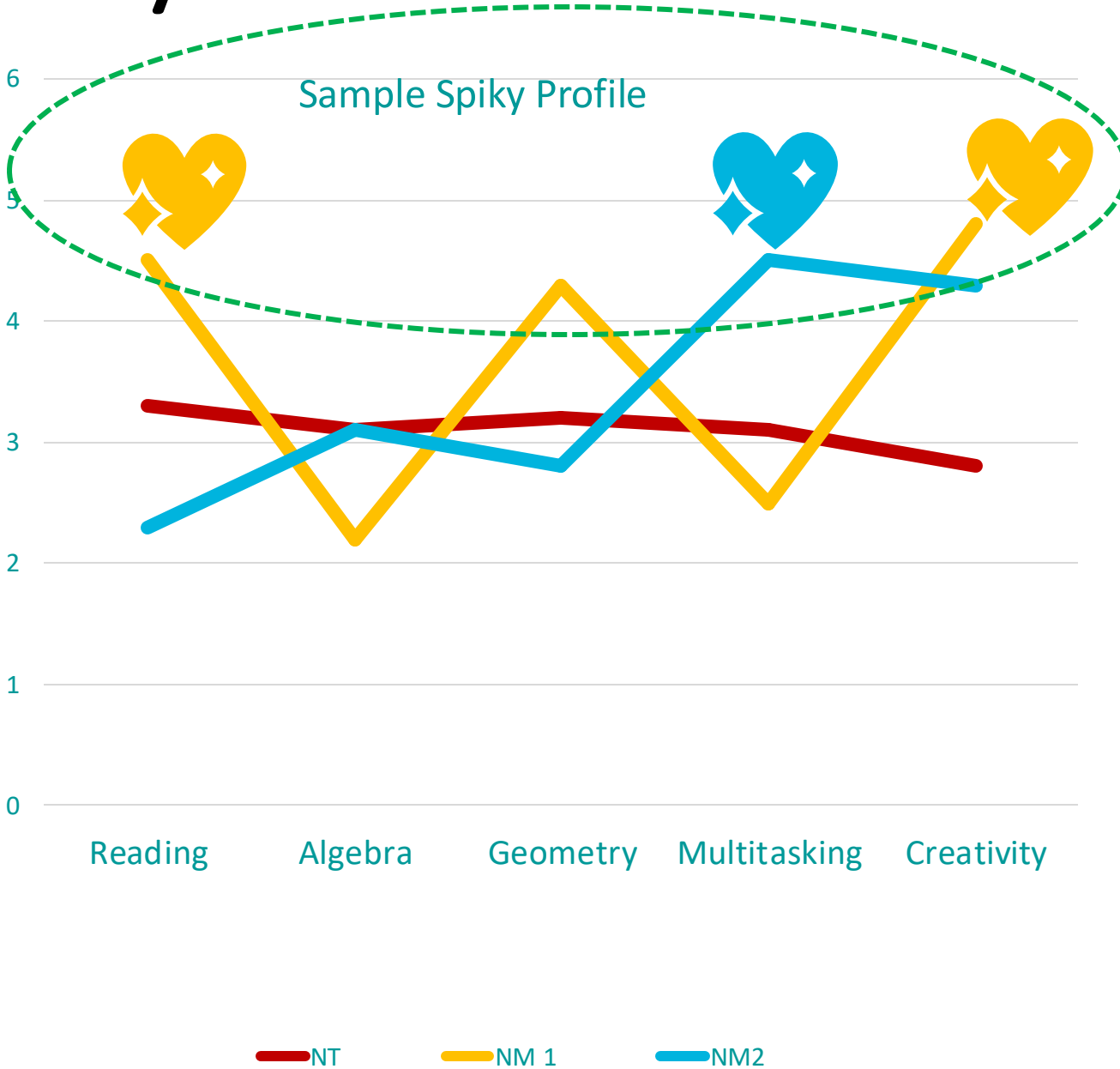
ADHD

Trauma

Synesthesia

Anxiety

Alt text: sample ability graphs; one (neurotypical) with all average abilities, two (neurominority) with varied highs and lows.



What ND people hear: character attributions & shaming

- “You can’t be so good at X and so bad at Y. You are not trying.”
- “Lazy”
- “Too sensitive”
- “Too quiet”
- “Too much”
- “Too much energy”
- “Too focused on one thing/stuck”
- “Too scattered”



“Fit in” / “Mask
harder”

Charlie Hart’s story

Costs of masking



Dead-end approaches to neurodiversity:

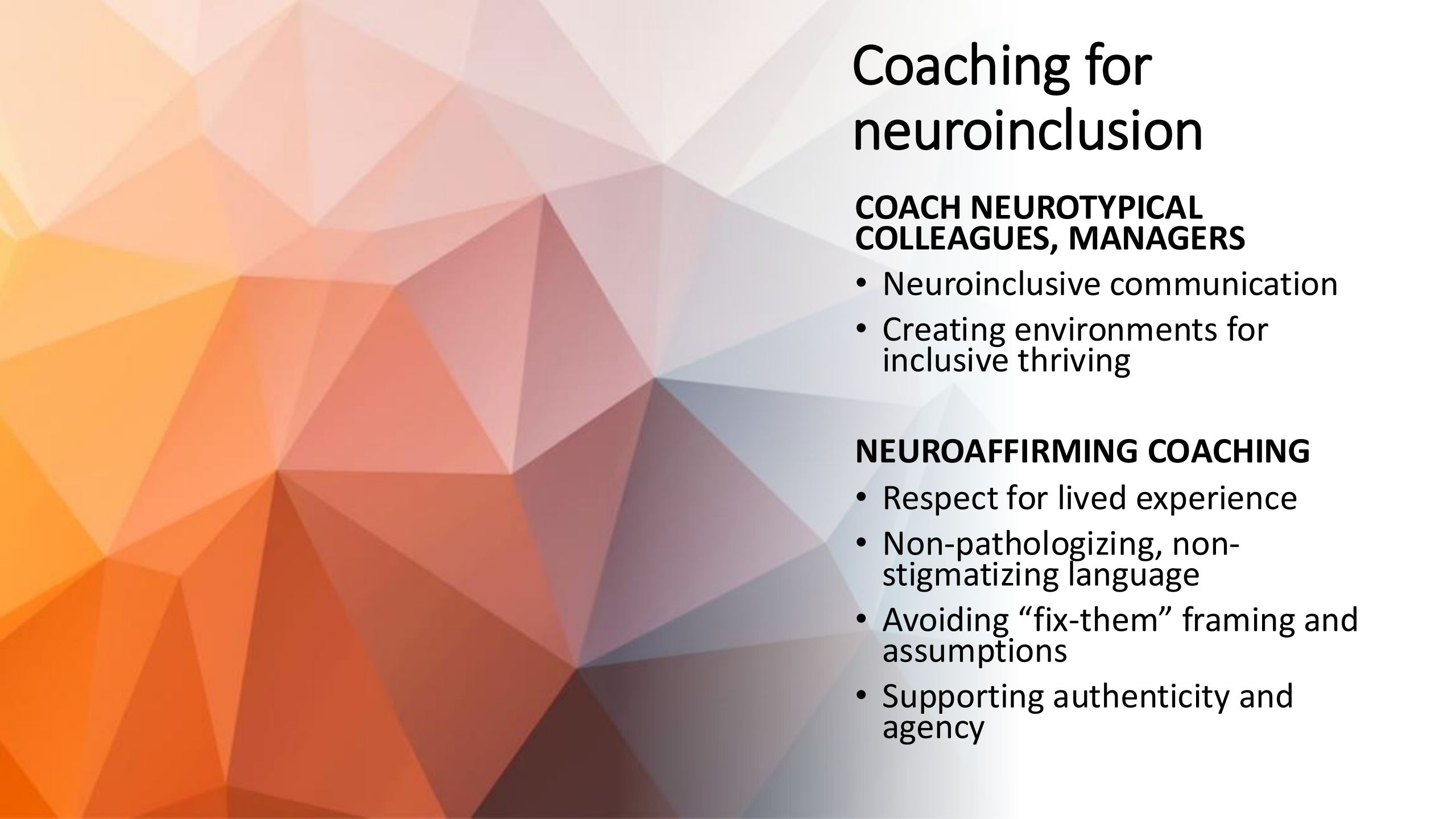
- Changing neurodivergent people to fit in
- Label-based hiring (“autistic tech workers”)
- Focus on “superpowers”



Bridges to the future

- Neuroaffirming support
- Creating flexible, inclusive environments





Coaching for neuroinclusion

COACH NEUROTYPICAL COLLEAGUES, MANAGERS

- Neuroinclusive communication
- Creating environments for inclusive thriving

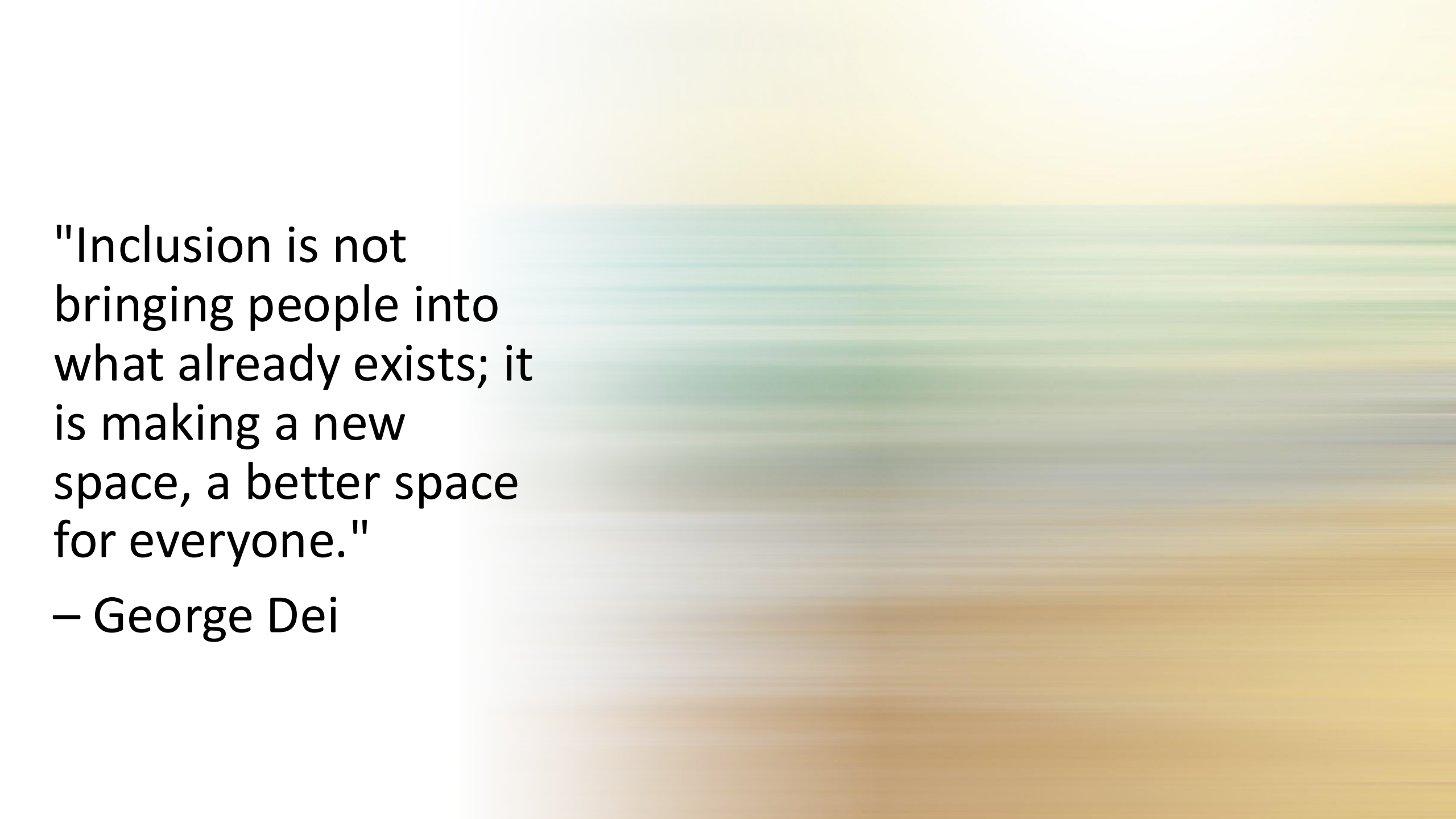
NEUROAFFIRMING COACHING

- Respect for lived experience
- Non-pathologizing, non-stigmatizing language
- Avoiding “fix-them” framing and assumptions
- Supporting authenticity and agency

Neuroaffirming support / based on neurodiversity framework



- **Do no harm:** understand the risks of compliance-based or masking strategies.
- **Believing:** respect sensory and other non-apparent needs.
- **Focusing on strengths:** building on cognitive assets, passions, and values vs. “fixing” perceived deficits.
- **Environmental problem-solving:** Supporting clients in identifying and negotiating changes in their environments vs. demanding individual adaptation.



"Inclusion is not
bringing people into
what already exists; it
is making a new
space, a better space
for everyone."

– George Dei

The platinum rule:

Treat others how *THEY* want to be treated



From holistic (neuro)inclusion to holistic belonging.

Shaping cultural norms to support multiple ways of being and participating in the community; culture-add organizations.

Social inclusion

Addressing cultural and ableist biases in emotional expression demands. Supporting a range of human emotional experience.

Emotional inclusion

Holistic Belonging

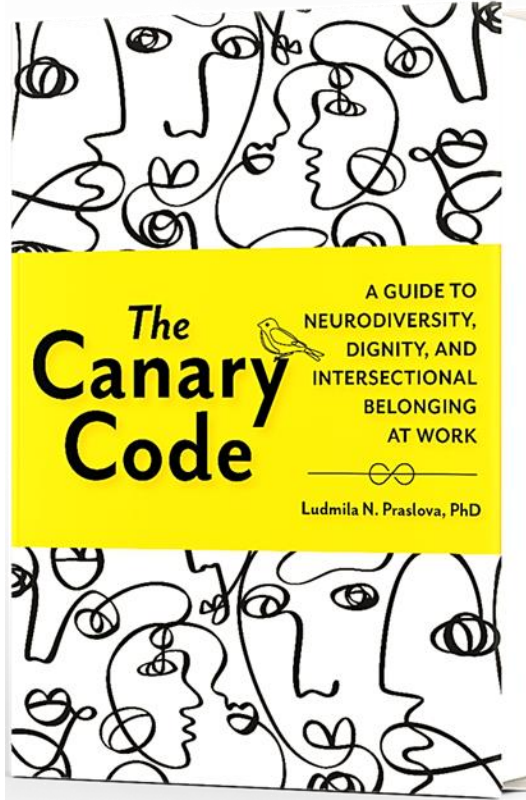
Cognitive inclusion

Creating environments supporting multiple thinking, learning, communication, and productivity needs and styles.

Physical/ sensory inclusion

Creating environments supporting a range of physical and sensory needs, both apparent and non-apparent.

Questions?



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