WOMEN IN ENERGY CONFERENCE

WORKING DIFFERENTLY

SELF-ADVOCACY AND THRIVING AT WORK

HILARY HORREY

GROUND RULES

BEFORE WE BEGIN

No rank in the room

Permission to be vulnerable

Assume no bad intent

Be comfortable being present and being yourself

People saw
the competence.
They couldn't
see the effort.

SHOW OF HANDS

I couldn't see the
effort until
it was removed.

THE NEURODIVERGENT LABEL

ONE UMBRELLA.
MANY EXPERIENCES.

STRENGTHS AND ACCESS NEEDS COEXIST -
THERE IS NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH

WHAT THEY SAW

MY VISIBLE STRENGTHS

Out-of-the-box thinking

Pattern recognition

Detailed preparation (perfectionism)

Translating complexity

Thrives in chaos

WHAT THEY COULD NOT SEE

Decoding.
Scripting.
Anticipating.
Monitoring.

Masking.
Suppressing.
Regulating.
Recovering.

BEHAVIOR IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT MAY BE UNDERNEATH
Many questions	→ **Building a clear picture**
Quiet in fast-paced meetings	→ **Processing time**
Direct language	→ **A preference for clarity**
Prefers to work solo	→ **Group dynamics = emotional effort**

A FOUR-PART TOOL

TURN FRICTION INTO A REQUEST

1

Friction

What keeps happening

2

Need

What would help

3

Request

One specific ask

4

Benefit

Why it helps the work

THE REQUEST SCRIPT

When [friction point] happens, I do my best work when [needed condition]. It helps me [benefit]. Could we try [specific request] for [time period] and then revisit it?

A REAL WORKPLACE EXAMPLE

NEW ERP DEPLOYMENT

FRICTION	Priorities change in several channels mid-response.
NEED	One written priority order and a clear decision owner.
REQUEST	A two-minute written recap in Teams after the call.
BENEFIT	Faster response. No ambiguity. Less rework.

YOUR TURN

1. What keeps happening?
2. What condition would help?
3. What is one specific request?
4. How would it help the work?

90 SECONDS

DESIGN THE WORK FOR MORE PEOPLE

ADAPTABLE TEAM PRACTICES

Deemphasize nonverbal cues and expectations

Offer more than one pathway to “great”

Normalize transition time

Offer sensory friendly workspaces & environment

Provide a dedicated Do Not Disturb time

ONE ACTION THIS WEEK

You do not need to reach a breaking point to **earn** support.

MAKE ONE REQUEST THAT HELPS YOUR BEST WORK SHOW UP

OR

MAKE ONE INVISIBLE EXPECTATION EXPLICIT

Questions?

BUILD YOUR REQUEST FOR A BETTER WORKDAY

Ask before you reach a breaking point. Keep it small, specific, and tied to the work.

1. Friction
What keeps happening?

2. Need
What condition would help?

3. Request
What is one specific ask?

4. Benefit
How does it help the work?

YOUR SCRIPT

When _____ happens, I do my best work when _____. It helps me _____. Could we try _____ for _____ and then revisit it?

Example: When we have back-to-back meetings, I do my best work when I can have a small transition time. It helps me switch contexts, feel better prepared, and reset to lead the discussion. Could we try pushing back our recurring [name of meeting] by 10 minutes for a month and then revisit?

Remember: You can ask for reasonable accommodation without sharing a label. Disclosure is personal.