

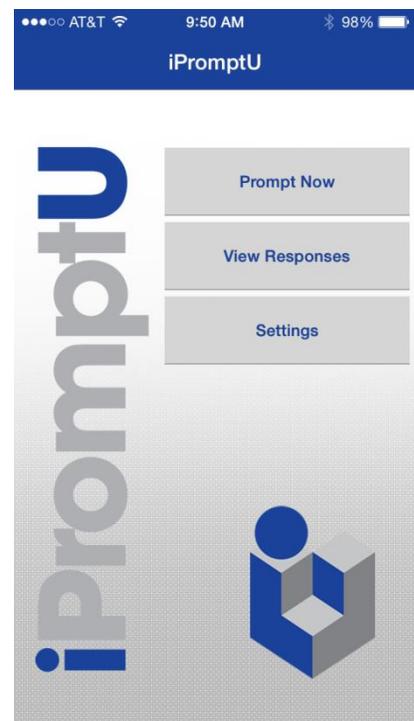
# iPromptU and Descriptive Experience Sampling

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**iPromptU** is an iPhone application that presents prompts at random or fixed time intervals and collects the user's responses. Uses include experience sampling, cognitive behavioral therapy homework, or any time sampling application. The app provides an easy, customizable way to log and send mood, thoughts, activities, experiences, and any other scientific observations.

This application was produced by the Cognitive Behavioral Institute of Albuquerque, LLC, Bradford C. Richards Ph.D., ABPP, Director and Supervising Psychologist. It was created by a collaboration between Russell T. Hurlburt, Ph.D., Professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and Bradford C. Richards Ph.D., ABPP.

**iPromptU** is available **free** from your app store.



# Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES)

Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES) is a method of exploring inner experience where subjects are asked to carry a random beeper as they go about their normal daily activities. They are instructed that when the beep sounds, they are to attend to whatever was directly present, ongoing in their inner experience the moment before the beep began, and to jot down notes about that experience. The DES target is thus the last undisturbed moment of pristine inner experience before the beep (which DES calls “the moment of the beep”). Of course, that moment’s experience is not completely undisturbed, but there is no known introspective method that has less disturbance. On any sampling day, subjects are typically asked to obtain about six randomly selected (by the beep) samples of their inner experience. Within 24 hours of collecting these samples of inner experience, subjects participate in an “expositional interview” with the investigators, wherein the subjects and investigators work collaboratively toward developing a high-fidelity apprehension of each sampled moment of inner experience. This carry the beeper/collect six samples/participate in expositional interview process is then repeated on (typically three to eight) subsequent days. The sampling process is thus a series of “iterative” on-the-job trainings: a repetitive working to increase the skills of both the subject and the investigators of apprehending the unique inner experience of the subject with increasingly greater fidelity.

More info:

Hurlburt, R. T. (2011). *Investigating pristine inner experience: Moments of truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hurlburt, R. T., & Schwitzgebel, E. (2007). *Describing inner experience? Proponent meets skeptic*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

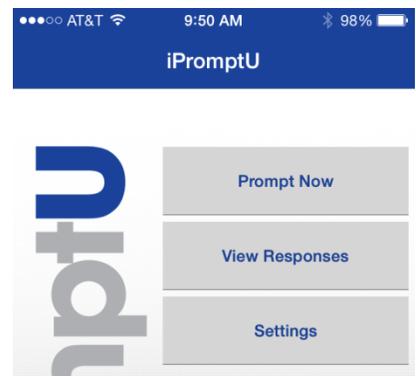
Hurlburt, R. T., & Heavey, C. L. (2006). *Exploring inner experience: The Descriptive Experience Sampling Method*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

# Using iPromptU as the DES Beeper

**iPromptU** is designed to be a sophisticated general tool that can collect lots of different kinds of data, and can easily serve as the DES beeper. Once you configure **iPromptU** to act as the DES beeper, you will carry the phone with you in your natural environments. At random intervals **iPromptU** will emit the standard DES beep and display the standard DES question: “What was in your experience at the moment of the beep?” You will use the phone keypad to enter your answer in the cell provided. That answer will be stored onboard the phone and/or emailed to an address that you provide.

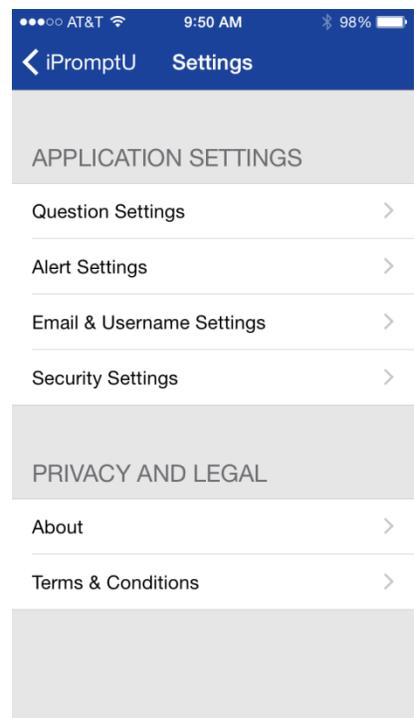
Here’s how to configure **iPromptU** to be a DES beeper.

1. On the **iPromptU** home screen, tap **Settings**.



That displays the Settings screen.

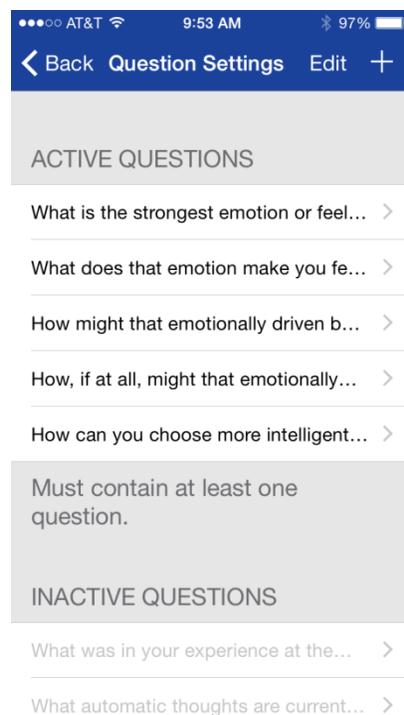
Tap **Question Settings**.



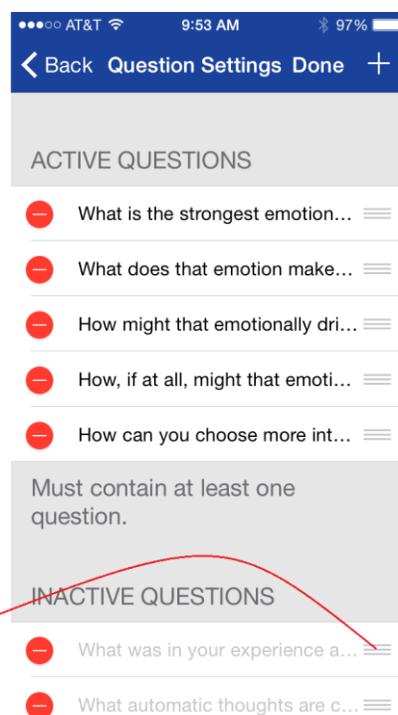
That displays the **Question Settings** screen.

2. Your task will be to move the DES question (“**What was in your experience at the...**”) from its position as the first of the **INACTIVE QUESTIONS** to the top, to become the first of the **ACTIVE QUESTIONS**. Then you will move the five current **ACTIVE QUESTIONS** down to become **INACTIVE QUESTIONS**. Here’s how.

Near the top of the screen tap [Edit](#)



That displays a screen like this:



**2a.** Tap and hold the edit handle (the three gray bars) next to “**What was in your experience a...**” and then drag that question to the top of the list.

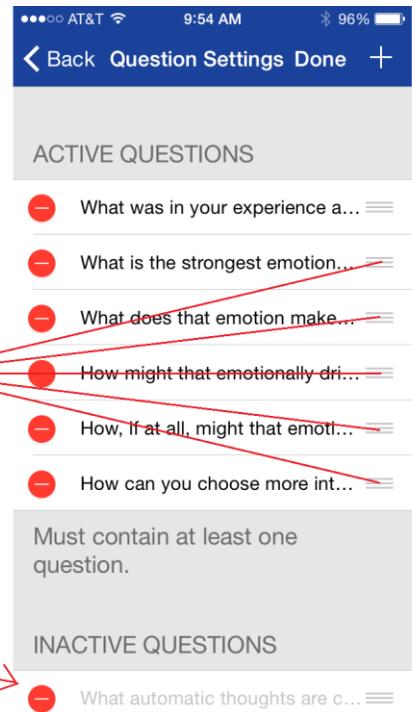
Tap this handle and drag the question to the top of the list

At this point your screen should look like this:

**2b.** Then tap the handle for each of the five non-DES questions and drag that question down to the **INACTIVE QUESTIONS** section (the order here is not important).

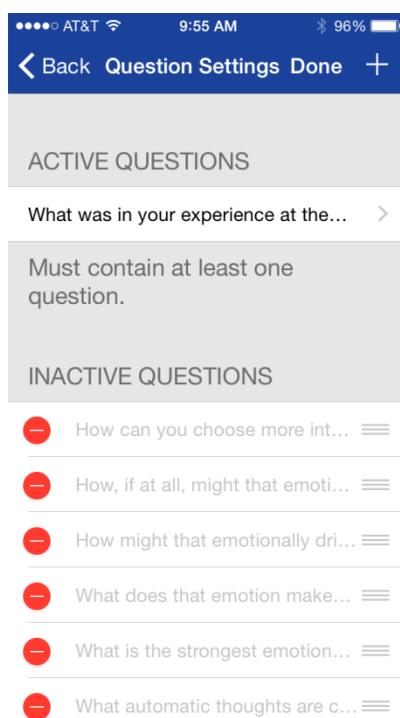
Tap each of these...

...and drag them here.



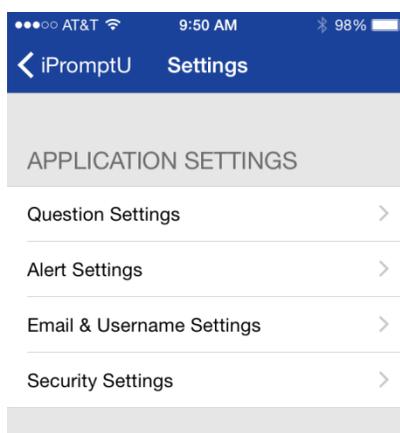
At this point the screen should look like this. That's the way you want it for DES.

Tap 



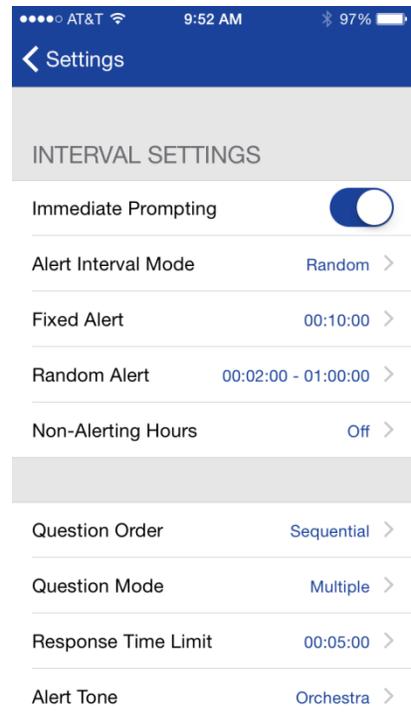
That takes you to back to the Settings screen.

From there tap **Alert Settings**.



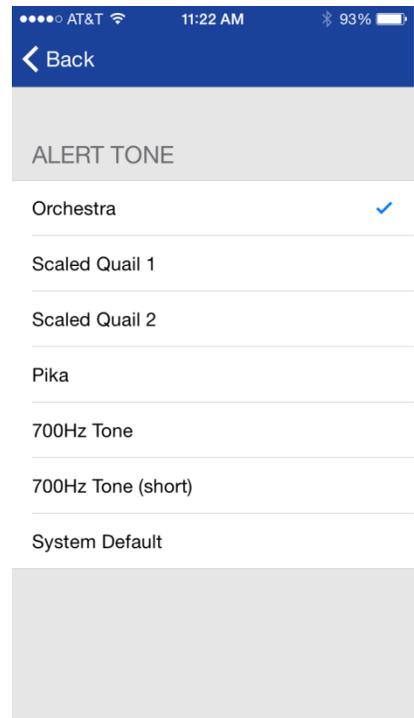
That displays the Alert Settings screen.

**3.** Turn OFF the **Immediate Prompting** slider if it is currently on.



Then tap **Alert Tone**.

That displays the **Alert Tone** screen.

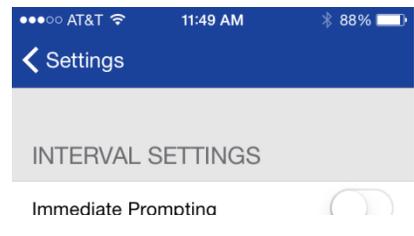


**4.** Select the DES standard **700Hz Tone**. That should place a check mark on the **700Hz Tone** line.

At the top of the screen tap 

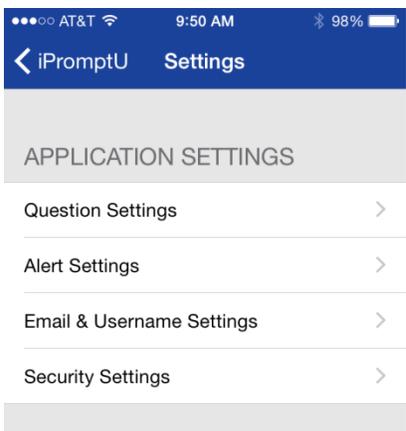
That returns you to the Alert Settings screen.

From there tap 



That returns you to the Settings screen.

Tap **Email & Username Settings**.

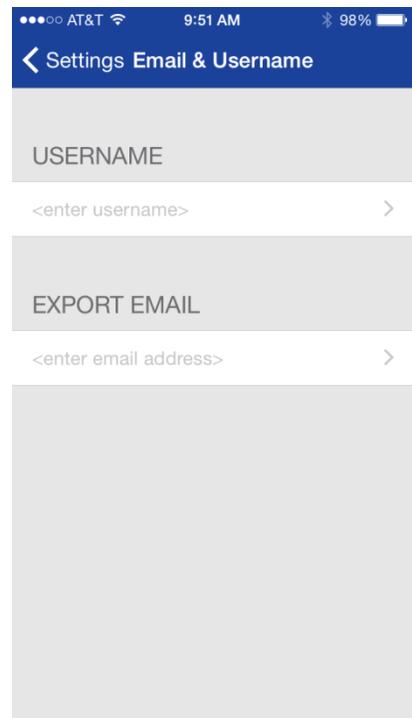


That displays the Email & Username screen.

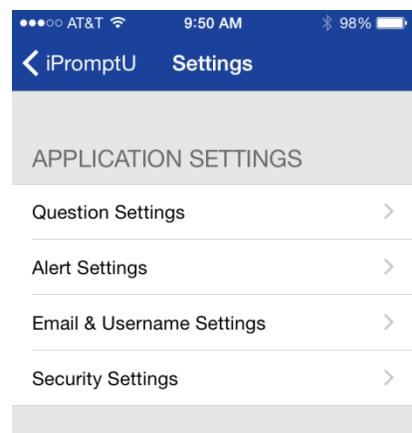
**5.** Enter a **USERNAME** which might be the DES subject's name or alias.

If you wish to have the user's responses emailed to you, enter your email address in the **EXPORT EMAIL** cell.

Then at the top of the screen tap 



That takes you back to the Settings screen.  
Tap **Security Settings**.



That displays the **Security Settings** screen.

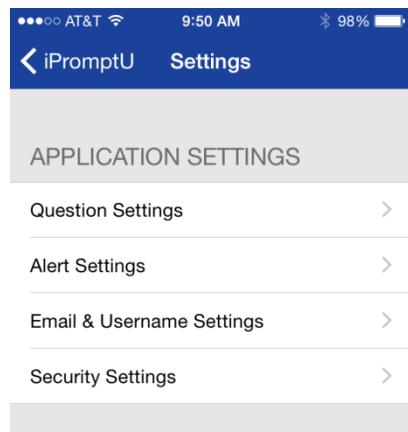
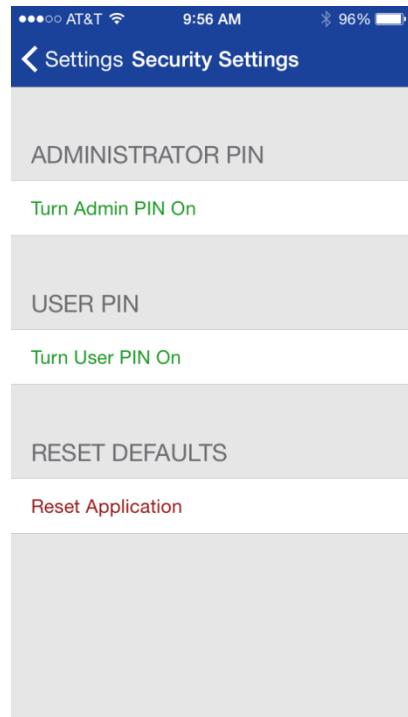
6. There are two levels of security. The Administrator has complete control of the **iPromptU** app. For example, all the settings that we have just discussed (the queries, the alert tone, etc.) are all controlled by the Administrator.

If you want to be the administrator of the app, so that no one else can change the settings, enter a 4-digit PIN into the **Administrator PIN** cell. Store the PIN in a safe place because you will need to reinstall **iPromptU** (losing all your data) if you lose it.

The User has control over the responses that he/she has typed in response to the queries. If the User wishes to keep those responses private (except to the Administrator, who can see everything), the User should enter a 4-digit PIN into the **User PIN** cell.

When finished, tap 

From the Settings screen, tap 



That's it! You have configured the app to function as a DES beeper. The **iPromptU** Home screen should look like this.

Three important notes:

a) **iPromptU** will operate (that is, deliver prompts) *only after you have returned to the iPromptU Home screen* (shown at right). That's what lets **iPromptU** know that you have finished with Settings.

b) Be sure that your iPhone is *not* in vibrate or silent mode.

c) DES studies have repeatedly found that using an earphone or earbuds is necessary to the success of DES. The iPhone onboard speaker is not adequate.

