

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY

Joe Jebelli: A Science Author

Interview 4: Sampling day 4

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the March 8 interview with Joe that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/DLUCeUTf2F0>. In green are comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

CK = Cody Kaneshiro

AG = Amber Goto

Joe = Joe Jebelli

0:04 Joe: Hi, Russ.

RTH: Good morning.

Joe: How are you?

RTH: Okay. Okay with you if I start the recorder?

Joe: Yeah, sure. Yeah.

Computer Voice: Recording in progress.

Joe: Okay.

RTH: I'm doing well, thanks.

Joe: Great. Hi Cody. Hi, Amber.

0:10 CK: Hi. Morning Joe. Er, afternoon.

Joe: Yeah.

RTH: What is it, five o'clock there?

Joe: Four o'clock.

RTH: Four. Four o'clock, right. Middle of the afternoon.

Joe: Yeah.

RTH: Barely past teatime.

Joe: No. Yeah, exactly. But I think everyone's definitely staying inside today. We've had like an arctic blast, and it's been snowing. It's freezing outside. [laughs]

RTH: Wow. Well we've had records here in the west. It isn't, it isn't terrible here in Las Vegas, but huge amounts of snow all around us.

Joe: Oh, really? Oh, I didn't know. I didn't know it snowed in Nevada; I thought it was just always hot.

0:53 RTH: It doesn't snow very often. I've seen in my house, which is just outside Las Vegas, snowflakes a couple of times this year, but nothing that's stuck. But in the mountains between here and the ocean, and in California they've got like 10 feet of snow in the last couple weeks, and people can't get out.

Joe: Oh, wow.

RTH: [inaudible] the mountain, so it's a serious deal for them.

Joe: Yeah.

RTH: There are people without food and medicine or whatever stuck in the mountains.

Joe: Oh gosh. Yeah, I suppose it's just difficult to know how to handle it if you're not used to it.

RTH: Yeah. Even in San Diego, I think. The mountains outside San Diego, they had a blizzard watch for the first time in history.

Joe: Oh my god.

RTH: So I guess global warming is a factor.

Joe: Yeah. This is worrying.

1:47 RTH: It certainly is. So we have any questions or comments or whatever before we launch into looking at beeps today?

Joe: No, I don't think so. I should mention that I did, I wore the beeper today instead of yesterday. And yeah, no, that's it, I think.

RTH: Then I think I'm as ready as I'm going to be.

CK: Yeah. Sounds good.

SAMPLE 4.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

2:20 Joe: Great. So the first beep, it went off just after half past 12. And I was sitting on my sofa watching the news, holding my phone, and the beep went off while I was staring off into space thinking about how to reply to an email that I had just read.

2:46 RTH: And when you say, “thinking about,” do you mean – is that in your experience or is that just a fact of the universe: I’m engaged in this unconsciously, or outside of my awareness or whatever?

Joe: I think it was definitely part of my awareness, because the thinking was, it was a decision. The email was about a house that me and my partner are trying to buy, and they’d just agreed to give us some money off for a bunch of problems with the house. And I was thinking about whether or not to accept it. So yeah, the thought was, the thinking was I was staring off into space and thinking about the decision basically, I think.

RTH: And so how does that thinking go? Is that, are you experiencing that, or are you just presuming that it’s ongoing and sooner or later you’re going to come up with an answer to it?

3:54 Joe: It’s strange because I find it quite difficult to explain, like to describe the experience of thinking about the decision. Because at the time, in my conscious awareness, I’ve written this down, I had an image of the house in my head, but in particular I had an image of the *garden* of the house in my head. So the thinking was quite visual, and I suppose the image of the garden of the house was more present in my experience than me consciously actively thinking, “Oh, should I accept it? Should I decline it and walk away?” But I was definitely, I was definitely picturing the garden of the house because I was thinking about whether or not we should say yes or just walk away.

RTH: And so does that mean that at the very moment of the beep, the picture, the inner seeing of the house is present to me? And the decision making is ongoing but not so much present to me, directly in my experience?

Joe: Yeah. Yeah. It was quite strange actually, cuz I remember I noted it down. The beep went off as I was staring off into space. I had the TV in front of me with the news just going, I had my phone in my left hand, but I was staring off into space and I could just, I could *see* the rest of my flat but the thing that was really present was the image of the garden of the house while I was thinking about whether – like how to reply to the email, like whether to say yes or no.

RTH: Well, let’s start with the garden then. So what do you see?

Joe: So I see – it’s only a very small part of the garden, and it’s the part that’s like right up against the house. It’s not even a [laughs] very nice part of the garden; it’s actually like the worst part of the garden, [laughs] so I dunno why I was thinking

that. And it was just, it was a white wall of the house, and it was where the white wall of the house meets the garden and there's like a bit of concrete, and it was that bit. So it wasn't like a lush – like the garden's not that big anyway, but it wasn't the actual – it wasn't really like the *good* part of the garden, it was just the concrete bit that met the white of the house.

RTH: Okay. And are you interested in any particular portion of that? Or is the whiteness of the wall, the concrete of it? Or is it just at the moment I happen to be seeing that and it happens to be a white wall, and it happens to be concrete?

Joe: Yeah, I don't know, I think it was – I don't know. I wasn't interested in any particular part. It was just where the white wall meets the concrete. It was, again, quite a small part of where the garden meets the house. For some reason I just pictured that.

RTH: Okay. And then at the same time there is apparently ongoing a thought process about should you accept the offer. But either that ongoingness is outside of your awareness, or so far we haven't figured out a way to talk about it.

7:42 Joe: Yeah, that's more difficult for me to describe because I don't know if at the moment of the beep, I, I, I don't ... It feels like I wasn't consciously processing that. It wasn't in my conscious mind, "Should I or shouldn't I." I feel like it was *there* because I was thinking of the house and the garden, and it was I was holding my phone, I had the email in front of me, but the beep, I don't ... I mean it's difficult for me to explain if that was actually a part of the beep, or if it was before, or if it *was* a part of the beep but it was subconscious, if that makes sense.

7:42 Russ comments: There are two possible understandings of this turn: (a) Joe's processing is outside of his awareness but somehow inferred (from what Joe knows about the facts of the situation) to be ongoing; or (b) that this is an instance of unsymbolized thinking (a directly apprehended experience of thinking without words or images) that is in conflict with a presupposition that all experienced thinking must be in words. RTH will not want to push too hard on option (b), because then the interview is open to the criticism that RTH is leading the witness. So we will see how he chooses to respond here.

8:32 RTH: Well, that thing kind of thing isn't surprising to me at all, because I think that we are multi-processors, and a lot of our thought process takes place outside of direct experience. Some of it is directly experienced, and some of it's not. And this, it sounds like, for reasons that are maybe a little bit hard to describe, the part that makes its way into awareness is the picture of the garden. I see that, I see the garden. And the rest of the processing I guess we can understand or infer something was probably ongoing, but it's not ongoing in my direct experience.

8:32 Russ comments: RTH elected to respond to option (a) [see the comment at 7:42]. That may present some future difficulties if it was indeed unsymbolized thinking.

9:12 Joe: Yeah. Yeah, I think that's a good reflection of the experience.

RTH: And then your eyeballs are aimed out into space, off to the right somewhere.

Joe: Mm.

RTH: And are you *seeing* that, the rest of your flat? Or is that just my eyeballs are pointing at the rest of my flat but I'm not really seeing it?

Joe: So I could see it, but it was definitely not in focus. Because normally when I look that way on the sofa I can see my bookshelf. And I quite like looking at my bookshelf because I think, "Oh I need to read that again" or whatever. But the bookshelf was very – it was hard to see, it was almost like I wasn't seeing it. It was either blurry or just very ... It was just very – I dunno, I want to say very out of focus. I want to say almost like it wasn't there.

RTH: So let's at least accept the possibility that my eyes can be open and aiming at something and not seeing it *at all*. And by not seeing it, I mean not experiencing it. My eyeball, my visual system, is no doubt processing it, but that doesn't mean that it's in my experience any more than my thought process of whether I should buy this house. No doubt my neurons are in some way engaged with them. Whether or not that's in my direct experience is another deal.

Joe: Yeah. Well the image of the bit of the garden, the garden and the house, was definitely a lot stronger than – to the point, I would say, to the point of making the bookshelf and the background of the flat almost invisible. I mean it was ... Yeah, it was like I didn't see it.

RTH: And I guess I would also say that we have discovered that it probably is not wise to try to distinguish between *almost invisible* and *invisible*.

Joe: Yeah. Yeah.

RTH: It's that kind of thing we call *in the weeds*. It's hard to think about it.

11:36 Joe: Yeah, it's difficult. It's really difficult for me. Ah! It's strange because I want to say it was invisible and that I didn't see it, because that *is* what it felt like, but I dunno. I suppose because I know that that's not possible, but ... And I dunno.

11:36 Russ comments: That is a good example of the operation of a presupposition: Apparently Joe accepts, to his core, that it is not possible to have your eyes aimed at something but not be seeing it. DES demonstrates repeatedly that such lack of seeing is actually very common, but many people believe it to be impossible.

11:57 RTH: Well that's why I said a little bit ago, let's accept that it *is* possible. [Joe: Okay.] And then that makes the battle that you're having right now something like well experientially I'm not seeing it, but cognitively I think I *must* be seeing it and therefore I've got this war going on inside me, well should I let my *cognition* win or should I let my experience *win*.

11:57 Russ comments: Note that RTH believes that presuppositions are (minor or major) delusions, but he does not attack the presupposition (any clinician knows that you can't talk someone out of a delusion). He lays out the alternatives, acknowledges the struggle without choosing sides.

Joe: Yeah, that's a good point. Yeah.

RTH: And so as a general rule, I would like us to *set aside* – what we call *bracket* – the cognitive understanding about the way experience *must* work, and just report about the experience.

12:49 Joe: Okay. Mm. Okay. Well yeah, I mean I think in that case it's ... I suppose my answer really is I don't know, but I'm leaning more towards I couldn't see it, because the image of the garden was very present.

RTH: So I accept both of those things, but I don't think they're necessarily related to each other. And the image can be very present, has absolutely nothing to do with whether your eyes, your real eyes are seeing the wall or not. An inner seeing can be present, and at the same time externally seeing; or an internal seeing can be present and *not* seeing what my eyeballs are aimed at. So t's not like... I *don't* want us to think that an inner seeing *obliterates* the external seeing. That, I don't think it's true in general. It might be true *sometimes*, but it's not true *always*, for sure.

But I would say that the battle between what I think *has* to happen and what I *actually* experience is a big part of the DES task. We try to set aside what we think *must* happen in favour of what we are directly experiencing.

Joe: Mm. Yeah.

14:17 RTH: And it's sort of the same thing. So I'm now going to call the attention to your backside and your butt or whatever, and when I do that you can say well I can feel the back of my chair and the bottom of my rear end and whatever. And I'm guessing that you haven't really been paying attention to that for the last 15 minutes. You've been skilfully navigating with that, you haven't fallen off the chair or whatever. But it's not in your direct experience even though your neurons have been processing that. And the same is true in the visual system, and the auditory system, and every other system, I think. You can do a lot of processing that takes place outside of awareness.

Joe: Mm. Yeah. Yeah, it's fascinating, because it makes me think that in our day-to-day lives we must be experiencing so much, but then when we try and think about that experience or explain it, people aren't ... Yeah, as you said, people are letting their cognition and the framing of things get in the way of the experience or actually ... Yeah, I dunno. Yeah, it's strange.

RTH: One problem is that the word *experience* itself is very problematic. So it's a legitimate version of the world to say that I'm experiencing the backside of my chair, and I'm experiencing the bottom of my feet, and I'm experiencing the sound of the air conditioner, and all that stuff. That stuff is being gathered by my sensory apparatus and processed to some degree, there's no question about that. Y'know, if somebody says, "Russ" over there in the next room, I'm going to pay attention to that, and so I've been monitoring the next room all the time to some degree. And it's fair to say, "Well, all that stuff is in my experience." *But* it's also fair to say there's really only a small, *much smaller* subset of that that's my *directly apprehended* experience. We could still call that *experience*.

But like your visualisation of the garden, we could say, well let's limit ourselves to *that* as being what I mean by *experience*. Those are two very different meanings of the same word, then that's part of what makes the world of psychology in general difficult. As a general, as a *principle*, descriptive experience sampling is interested in the kind of thing that makes its way into your *directly apprehended* experience like the seeing of the garden, and is *not* particularly interested in that broader, more mechanical, I guess you could say, or afferential, or whatever version of experience.

Joe: Mm. Yeah.

RTH: You're processing a whole lot of stuff that you would *never* become aware of.

Joe: Yeah. Do you, I mean, do you think that this means that we're in many ways quite bad at observing things then, because everything I ... Because they say, don't they, that the visual system just forms an impression of the outside world, that it's not actually – you are just interrupting wavelengths of light, and it's just an impression of what's really out there. And so if we are doing that, and if we're observing things, as you said, like using processing and cognitive abilities that may then almost scramble the sort of authenticity of the experience, do you think that means that we're quite bad observers? Or I'm not sure if that question makes sense.

RTH: So I guess I would say I either *don't care* about that problem, or I don't think it's *tractable*. I guess I care about it, but I don't think it's tractable, so I don't spend too much time thinking about it. What I think is that the however any billion neurons and however any multi-billion synapses you've got in the bag of bones and skin and whatever that's called Joe Jebelli, that stuff is operating all the time in ways which you can't describe, and I can't describe it, and nobody can describe.

And out of that, for some reason, most people make something that is directly apprehended. You, in this beep, are seeing the wall, seeing the wall in the garden. Why is that? I don't think we can explain that. We can speculate about it, but I don't think there's *too much* doubt that at the moment of the beep, for whatever reason, Joe's bag of bones ended up *seeing* something that wasn't present to him at the moment, and so we're going to, we're going to call that an inner seeing, or seeing an image, or something.

Joe: Mm-mm. Okay. Yeah.

RTH: And at the same time, Joe's bag of bones was processing all of that other stuff that wasn't present to him in the same way that – or even *close* as the wall scene, garden scene. And because of the difficulty of that, what *our task*, the DES task is, well let's just try to stick with the kinds of stuff that actually does make its way into directly apprehended experience and leave all that other stuff off to the side because there's just a) too much of it and b) we can't access it. Maybe somebody else will come along with a super FMRI or whatever that you plug in and gather all of your synaptic information. I doubt that; that's a pretty complicated task. But could be. But that's not our task. Our task is to try to – at first at least – just describe, *for whatever reason*, Joe's seeing the wall of his garden.

And his eyeballs are aimed at the wall, and maybe he is seeing it, maybe he's not, are sort of hard to tell. But certainly he is not seeing it at the same level of discrimination, or interest, or what do we call it. Is he seeing something that's not present at all, namely the garden wall, and that's about as far as we can go.

21:19 Joe: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Yeah, I feel like the inner seeing, I feel like it must happen a lot more than maybe people realise, that they just don't notice it as much. I dunno, it's strange.

RTH: Well, maybe that's true *for you*, but that's not necessarily true for everybody else. But my recollection is that you've got a lot of inner seeing, and I'm not actually even sure about that because I don't have a very good memory for that kind of stuff. But it's not fair to judge somebody else's experience from your own. A lot of people don't have any, never have any inner seeing at all.

Joe: Oh yeah. Okay.

21:57 RTH: But what I would *say* is that the reason that *I* can say that with pretty much confidence is that I've spent quite a bit of time with people like you trying to be as careful as we can be about what's going on in particular moments. And I'm pretty sure that quite a few of those moments *don't* involve inner seeing. Some do.

Joe: Mm. Okay. Mm. Okay.

RTH: But if your general point was: people are relatively bad at characterising their own or others inner experience, I'm a hundred percent behind that.

Joe: That's a much better way of putting my train of thought. Yeah, that's exactly what I was thinking.

RTH: I think that's very true. And the reason for that is that in order to contradict that you've got to go through the thing that we're going through right now, which is hard work and time consuming, energy consuming, and has response costs and whatever.

Joe: Mm. Yeah, yeah. No, it is challenging. It's really challenging, especially the bracketing of the presuppositions. I understand now why at the beginning of all this you said that it's going to take time and practice. Yeah.

23:17 RTH: And this, this beep is a good example of that I think, because I would say the *likelihood* is you've got a pretty strong presupposition that *if your eyes are pointing at the bookshelf you must be seeing the bookshelf*. I'm *guessing* that's a presupposition, and then somewhere down the road you're going to become more confident in saying, "Well my eyes were aimed at that, but I wasn't seeing it *at all*." I'm not really sure about that, and that's what makes the task one of, well, I guess *skill* for a better word. But we've got to convey to you that it looks like a presupposition without saying you're *wrong* about it, because it could be that it looks like a presupposition, but it's *not* a presupposition—our eyes really *are* seeing the bookshelf.

So I'm not trying to say, "Look here, Joe, your eyes are aimed at it, but you weren't seeing the bookshelf." I'm *not* saying that. What I'm saying is: it *sounds* – I might be mistaken, but it sounds *to me* like you've got a battle going on between your experience and your presuppositions. And a *lot* of people, maybe most people, probably almost everybody *loses* to their presuppositions in the first round of the fight. And it takes a while for the experience to regroup and be able to say well this was experienced and that wasn't.

23:17 Russ comments: The challenge of the iterative method is that the interview has to convey that today's descriptions aren't really good enough, without that sounding judgmental or disparaging. The good news is that it is a virtuous cycle: the more faith you have in the iterative method, the easier it is to be non-judgmental; the more non-judgmental you are, the easier it is to have faith in the iterative method; and so on.

Joe: Mm. Mm, yeah, that's really well put.

RTH: Onto beep number 2?

SAMPLE 4.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

24:54 Joe: Sure. Okay. So beep number 2 went off not that long after beep number 1. I was still sitting on the sofa. I was petting one of my cats, um. and I was looking at the

bookshelf and I was noticing the red spines of the bookshelf. And, yeah, I wasn't really thinking anything. I was just noticing – for some reason I was noticing the red spines, like the color red.

CK: And so what exactly do you mean by noticing? Or how does that noticing go?

25:45 Joe: I was looking at the bookshelf, and I was scanning it with my eyes, and for some reason I was, the spines of the red books were jumping out more than the other books. And I noticed that that was happening. Yeah, I just noticed that. I noticed that was happening and I couldn't ... But I wasn't really thinking anything, I was just noticing for some reason the red spines.

25:45 Russ comments: Joe describes two potentially very different experiences. One is what DES would call *sensory awareness*: Joe is noticing the red spines. The other is what DES would call *meta-experience*: Joe is noticing *himself noticing* the red spines. The interview will try to tease those apart, but the going is likely to be difficult, because people have lots of presuppositions about meta-experience that will have to be bracketed; and therefore it is very possible that what is *said to be* meta-experience is actually just a presupposition at work.

CK: And so is it at the moment of the beep what is most prominent, most salient, is the red spines and that's sort of it? Or it's possible the red spines deal is going on, and in addition to that, simultaneous to that, I have a, I am at the moment of the beep noticing to myself the red spines *are* sticking out? Or something else? So the question is, is it just about the red spines-ness, or about noticing the red spines-ness or is it sort of noting the red and I'm recognising that I'm into the red spines-ness, or something? Or into the redness?

Joe: Yeah, it was both; it was noticing the red spines, but then also noticing that I'm noticing the red spines. I mean because I was just scanning, I was scanning it, and it was almost as if my eyes were jumping around to the red spines. But as that was happening, and I was seeing, I was noticing the red, there was – at the same time I was noticing that I was noticing that for some reason.

CK: And that's caught in flight by the beep?

Joe: Yeah. Yeah. Because I was just on the sofa with my cat, and I just looked up at the bookshelf, and I was just looking at it and then I, and then that happened, and the beep went off as that was happening.

RTH: So can I ask a couple questions here? So are there multiple red spines and I'm going from one red spine to one over there, the one over there, or whatever? Is that it?

Joe: Yeah.

28:23 RTH: So I'm not interested at the moment of the beep in *one particular* red spine?

Joe: No, it was like multiple, like sort of dotted around.

RTH: Okay. And then about the noticing that I'm noticing, so that would be ... The noticing of the red spines is something that's aimed *out there*, right; the bookshelf is out there, I'm seeing a spine there and a spine there and a spine there or whatever. The part that I'm noticing the red spines is I'm noticing this *about Joe*, and what I would like to – following up on Cody's question – is that present at the same time as I'm looking at the red spines? *Or* is that something that happens; so the beep happens, I'm looking at the red spines; and *then* I notice *well I'm looking at the red spines*?

29:13 Joe: I feel like... It was... The noticing of the red spines came *before* me noticing that I was noticing it, but they were so close together that I still feel pretty confident that the *noticing that I was noticing it* was still in the moment of the beep. [RTH: Okay.] But they were, they were *very* close together. I would say that the first thing was me noticing just the red spines, and then, but then I noticed that I was noticing it. Yeah, I am pretty confident that they were both part of the beep, but very close together. But I agree with you that there *was* like, was a separation; they weren't both happening at the same time. I think the first thing was that I was just noticing them flicking around. I was flicking around between them and noticing them.

29:13 Russ comments (following up on the comment at 25:45): So was Joe's experience both a *sensory awareness* (aimed *outward* at the red spines) *and* a meta-experience (aimed *inward* at Joe's noticing of his own noticing)? The good news is that we don't have to answer this question—we can trust the iterative process. We have in this discussion improved our understanding of the distinction between sensory awareness and meta-experience, and if that distinction becomes important on subsequent sampling days, Joe will be in a better position to note and examine the experience in the seconds immediately after it occurs.

[If I had to bet (which I don't), I'd bet against meta-experience on this sample, because of the equivocation in its description. But DES is *not* about betting, *not* about speculating, *not* about inferring, *not* about interpreting. It is about helping Joe and us get in a position to apprehend directly at the moment of the beep, without having to bet, speculate, infer, or interpret.

30:13 RTH: Okay.

CK: So of the red spines deal, I understood you to be saying at some point that this primarily of the redness, like the color of the book and not so much the spine-ness. It happens to be of these book spines, but it's, it's the redness.

Joe: Yeah.

- CK: Is that faithful to what was going on there at the moment?
- Joe: Yeah, it was the redness. That, it just stuck out for some reason. They're very bright red, and for whatever reason they were just sticking out more than the other ones, more than the other books. But it was definitely the color red that was that I was noticing.
- CK: When you say they're very bright red, is that just the fact that you have that I'm taking in ... These books are really, really red and I'm taking that in? Or in my experience is that have I *turned up* the redness? Am I seeing them as *more red* than they actually are in reality?
- Joe: Yeah, that's a really good question. That's difficult to answer. [pause] They did appear brighter than the other books around them, but that was – I think that was because I was noticing them so much more than the other books; they were sticking out so much. So it's hard for me to know if me noticing them more than the other books was why they appeared a bit brighter, or that actually the other books just appeared fainter because I was noticing the red ones more. I can't tell if the red books were brighter or if the other books were fainter. There was definitely a difference though.
- CK: The redness is prominent?
- Joe: Yeah. Yeah.
- CK: And is there any way to say that ... You know, I understand like you to be saying earlier, there's several books on the bookshelf that are red, and so is this like a ... I can imagine there's y'know, two – sorry, there's two things of red, one on this side of the bookshelf and one on the other, or there's 10 or there's 50, or ... I'm not interested in a number, I'm curious just about how ... I understand the redness, the red-spined books are the ones that are sticking out.
- Joe: Mm.
- CK: Can you say anything more about how that's present?
- Joe: Well, so it's multiple shelves, so it wasn't like I was looking across. They appeared sort of ... I mean there's quite a few of them, the red books, there's about six or seven red books and they were appearing on different shelves. So like, one was up here, one was down here, one was like over here, [points to seemingly random locations] so they appeared as essentially a series of red blocks scattered over a wall of books basically.
- 34:08 RTH: So what I've got out of this experience is that at the moment of the beep I'm going from red to red to red, which happen to be spines of books. But it's not really I'm going from spine to spine to spine, it's from red to red to red.

Joe: Yeah.

RTH: And *maybe* I am aware of myself as doing that, or *maybe not*, that's a little hard to tell.

Joe: Yeah, yeah, I agree with that.

RTH: And that's basically it.

Joe: Yeah. Yeah. I have no idea why I was doing that.

RTH: Okay. So the good news is we don't have to know that. And I'm ready to move by to beep number 3.

CK: Sounds good.

34:49 RTH: Well, I guess I would say from this, as sort of an aside, a lot of people *are* visually attracted to colours like that every now and then, sometimes. Some people are often. A lot of people are surprised that they do that and don't have a good explanation for that, and I don't either, but it's pretty common.

34:49 Russ comments: RTH has written that people are often rather shy about describing their sensory awareness, so he feels the need to be supportive of Joe's description. Also, he notes that (probably for the same reason) sensory awareness as a phenomenon often begins to emerge only on the third or fourth sampling day.

Hurlburt, R. T., Heavey, C. L., & Bensaheb, A. (2009). Sensory awareness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 16 (10-12), 231-251.

SAMPLE 4.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

35:26 Joe: Oh, Okay. Mm. Yeah, so beep number three, so this happened at five to two, and I'm in the kitchen, I'm basically tidying up the kitchen and I'm listening to an audiobook at the same time. And the beep went off when I was, I was looking down at my socks and I was noticing, I was noticing what looks, a rabbit on my sock for some reason.

36:06 AG: And so "I'm noticing," how is that present to you?

36:06 Russ comments: This is a risky question because it invites a report of meta-experience—it aims at the manner of noticing (a meta-characteristic) rather than at the characteristics that are noticed.

Joe: So –

AG: Is that just a ...

Joe: It's just like I was looking down because I was unpacking the dishwasher, and then I was looking at my, I was looking at my socks because there's a big blue rabbit on the socks. And I dunno, there was something, I just noticed the rabbit, and I was just looking at the rabbit for, like, I dunno, like a couple of seconds, not very long at all, as the beep went off.

AG: Okay, so is this experience, I'm noticing a rabbit or I'm noticing blue that happens to be of a rabbit?

Joe: It was the rabbit.

AG: Okay.

Joe: It was noticing the rabbit. I'm not sure. Yeah, I think ... Yeah, these are new socks that my partner got me, so I dunno, maybe ... But then I don't know ... Yeah, I know I have these socks, so it wasn't like surprise, it wasn't like "Oh, there's a rabbit, why am I wearing socks with a blue rabbit on them?" I know I have them, but – I've had them for a while, but I was noticing the rabbit for some reason.

37:48 AG: And I think I may have asked this, but I just want to clarify. So is this I'm noticing a rabbit that happens to be blue, or I'm noticing a blue rabbit? It's not even ... It's neither more about the blue or the rabbit, it's just I'm noticing the blue rabbit, or the rabbit that happens to be blue. Does that distinction make sense?

Joe: Got it. It's the rabbit that happens to be blue.

AG: Okay. And is there anything more to be said about that?

Joe: I mean ... Not really. I mean there was ... I feel like there was a sort of faint feeling of happiness as well at the same time.

AG: Okay.

Joe: Sort of, yeah, kind of a happiness that... I mean I like these socks. No, yeah, I dunno, there was a feeling, there was a faint feeling of happiness, but it wasn't anything more than that. I wasn't really thinking anything.

AG: And that faint feeling happiness was occurring at the moment of the beep?

Joe: Yeah. As I'm noticing the rabbit.

AG: And is there anything more to say about how that's present to you?

Joe: No, it was quite faint because I mean I was a little bit distracted as well because I was listening to an audiobook at the same time. So yeah, it's hard to explain. I

mean, yeah, it's difficult. This probably not related to it, but it's possible that the happiness is linked, because I mean all of my socks have holes in them, so my partner got me these socks, they're actually quite nice. So I mean the happiness feeling was a comfort feeling as well, and that ... Yeah, I dunno.

RTH: And I'm gathering that the happy, comfort, whatever, is associated with the socks. It's not like just in general I'm happy and the beep catches me. It's that I'm happily, comforting, looking at the socks.

Joe: Yeah, exactly.

RTH: Okay. And I also gather that the audiobook is going on but it's not part of my direct experience.

Joe: No. No, the rabbit [laughs] – the rabbit and the socks – were more present to me than the audiobook, because the audiobook was a bit boring.

RTH: Okay. And so I think it's possible that your system is *processing* what you are *hearing* in the audiobook, but you're not responding to that before the footlights of consciousness. *Or* it's possible that you've just tuned the audiobook out altogether, and in favour of the socks, for whatever reason, in this moment. And then you'll have to climb back onto the audiobook when you get there.

Joe: Mm.

RTH: So I'm happy; number three.

AG: Is there anything else in your experience at the moment, Joe?

Joe: No, I mean I've written down the word "company," because like I noticed that I heard the word company from the audiobook at the moment of the beep, but that wasn't as present. I mean, it was a part of the moment of the beep, just the hearing the word "company." I didn't see the word, I just heard the word, but it wasn't as present as the rabbit and the socks.

AG: Okay. And is that just I'm hearing the audiobook, the beep happens to come at the word "company"? Is "company" part of a sentence?

Joe: Yeah, it was part of the sentence "I enjoy his company," or "I enjoy your company." I didn't write it down; it was definitely one of those two. And yeah. But yeah

AG: And is the meaning of the word "company" in your experience at all as a part of this hearing? Or is it just I'm hearing the word "company" and that's as far as it goes?

Joe: Yeah, it was just the word company. Like just I wasn't really thinking about it. [AG: Okay.] The audio book just wasn't engaging me. Yeah. But, yeah, but I definitely – I did notice the word “company” for some reason, which is ... And I mean and it went off at the moment of the beep which is why I wrote it down. So it was *there*, but it was just there as a word. I wasn't really thinking about the meaning or how it related to the rest of the ... Like I wasn't thinking about it like how I should, I suppose, like if I was actually properly like engaged with the audiobook. Like I didn't, it wasn't forming a part of the story or the narrative in any way, it was just kind of on its own. I think that's because I just wasn't engaged with the audiobook, so it was just *words* coming at me.

44:10 AG: Okay. And is there anything more to be said about that?

Joe: No, I don't think so. No.

AG: Okay. And is there anything else, again, in your experience other than what we've talked about?

Joe: No, apart from like the dishwasher; the door on the dishwasher was pulled down, but I wasn't really noticing that at the moment of the beep. At the moment of the beep I was much more drawn to my foot and the sock and the rabbit.

AG: Okay. So the dishwasher, that's more of like a fact of the universe?

Joe: Yeah.

AG: Like it was down, and I was..?

Joe: Yeah. Exactly.

AG: Then is there any other question?

RTH: Number 4.

SAMPLE 4.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

45:07 Joe: So number 4 I don't want to talk about if that's all right.

RTH: Okay.

SAMPLE 4.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

45:14 Joe: And that's also true of number 5 if that's all right.

RTH: Okay. Number 6.

SAMPLE 4.6 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

45:22 Joe: So number 6. So it was at three o'clock and I was walking down my road, and I was turning around – I was turning a corner to come onto my high street to get a coffee. And so as I was walking into the coffeeshop, I saw my friend Naz who works at the coffeeshop, and he fist-bumped me while I was thinking about the word “story.” [laughs] Yeah, so I was, so I turned the corner, I was walking into the coffeeshop, I didn't actually *see* him at first because I was looking down, and then I looked up and I was thinking of the word “story” for some reason. And as I was thinking the word “story” and walking into the coffeeshop the beep went off at that moment. But he was in front of me, and he was smiling and fist-bumping me. Yeah.

RTH: And is the fist-bumping at the moment of the beep or after the beep? And by the moment of the beep I mean actually one microsecond just before the beep begins?

Joe: No. So the fist-bumping was immediately like a microsecond *after* the beep went off. So the actual *moment* of the beep was – the moment of the beep itself was me walking into the coffeeshop thinking of the word “story,” and then *seeing* Naz. Yeah, that's the moment. That's the moment of the beep. He then very quickly fist-bumped me, but yeah, that wasn't the exact moment of the beep, that was a moment afterwards I would say.

RTH: And is the walking present to you, or is that just a fact of the universe? So my question is basically is what's present in your experience the word “story” and that's about it; everything else is context or comes after? *Or* is something about the walking, or the entry into the store part of your – directly apprehended experience?

Joe: No. The walking was more just a fact of the universe. The word “story” was very much a part of my experience.

48:02 RTH: All right, so let's talk about that. So how does the word “story” present itself to you?

Joe: Uh, it's, I could *hear* it basically in my head, but I can't quite figure out if I was hearing it or if it was inner *hearing* versus inner *speech*. I'm not quite sure which of those it was. I've written down that I think it was more inner hearing, just hearing the word “story.”

RTH: In a voice?

Joe: Yeah, kind of like a whisper.

RTH: And a voice that had characteristics, [inaudible]?

Joe: Not really, but if I had to give ownership of it to anyone it would be me. Like it sounded ... It didn't sound like an alien, like a different – like an unfamiliar voice.

RTH: So it sounded like me whispering “story”?

Joe: Yeah. Basically. Yeah.

RTH: And the question is whether I also experienced myself as doing the whispering as the speaker of the whisperer, or whether I hear it, I hear it as an auditory phenomenon.

Joe: Mm. Yeah. Like my mouth wasn't moving, I wasn't muttering it. I definitely *heard* it, but the confusing thing for me is whether or not I *heard* it as that it was delivered into my consciousness, or if I constructed it, if that makes sense. So I dunno if there's a real distinction there, but ...

50:04 RTH: Well, let's accept the fact that you constructed it because it's in your head, and I'm not there doing it, so you're the constructor of it. So the question is whether the *experience* is an auditory experience – an inner auditory experience, [points to his ears] I *hear* this – or whether it seems like an inner speaking experience [gestures coming out of his mouth] – I speak, maybe I speak and hear it. So the question is, do I have the *experience of speaking* – even though my mouth isn't moving or whatever, I could still experience myself as speaking it – or it can be entirely auditory. And the distinction there, maybe we've used this before, is something like speaking into a tape recorder: I can imagine myself speaking, whispering “story” into a tape recorder, in which case it's the experience of speaking and then maybe hearing myself at the same time. Or I could also imagine myself as hearing a whispered “story” coming back out of this tape recorder, in which case there's no speaking involved in the experience.

51:11 Joe: Mm. It's really difficult because when you're explaining the speaking it into a recorder I feel like *that* was much more what the experience was as opposed to *hearing* it. But then when you said the second bit about hearing it as a whisper, a part of me then thinks *hang on, it was kind of like that*, like hearing it as a whisper. It strangely felt like a bit of both, like I was hearing it as a whisper, but that it was also me whispering into a tape recorder to use your metaphor. It felt like a bit of both.

52:02 RTH: And that is possible; I'm not discounting that possibility at all. And what I would say is this another example of why we have to do this on multiple occasions, because now we're going to have spent some time thinking about what the difference between *whispering* and *hearing a whisper* is. And next time, if a similar thing happens, it might be easier for you to sort that through. Or maybe not. Maybe the experience (excuse me) is just you're irretrievably conflated between hearing it and speaking it and we can't tease those two things apart. I don't have a theory about that either.

Joe: Mm.

RTH: But, so let's leave that as so *somehow* I'm apprehending a whispered "story," and maybe I'm mostly hearing it, maybe I'm mostly speaking it, we're not sure about that; we can leave that as unspecified. And how about "story"? What's the deal with "story"? Is that part of a sentence or just the word "story"?

Joe: No, it was just the word "story". Yeah.

RTH: And it's – Oh, go ahead.

Joe: Yeah, no, it was just the word "story." [pause] Yeah, I mean it's difficult to explain because it wasn't linked to anything else.

RTH: Does it refer to a particular story? Do you know it?

Joe: No, I mean it was almost like I was I was trying to figure out what a story is. [laughs] Like it wasn't just like the word on its ... I mean so, it was the word on its own, it wasn't linked to anything else. But there was like a ... There was like some kind of question over it as well, like I was wondering what a story *is*. I don't know, it was almost like my brain was trying to make sense of what *is* a story.

RTH: Huh. And what is a story in general, not ... Not is this thing that I'm contemplating doing a story? Or is that thing that I heard a story? But what is a story?

54:53 Joe: It was more just what is a story, yeah. I heard the word, and it was ... Yeah. Just didn't ... Yeah. Just ... Yeah. I dunno if that's ... I can't tell if it was that I just momentarily lost the understanding of the word "story," or if I was sort of like just maybe having a slightly deeper thought about what is the story. I dunno which of those two it is, or maybe there's ... There's probably lots of other possibilities. But, yeah, there was definitely like a question hanging over it, like I didn't ... I was wondering what a story is.

54:53 Russ comments: Recall that on previous days there have been many samples involving some sort of focus on words: *L I G H T* on a plank in 2.3, *rotted duff* in 3.2, *Go* on a plank in 3.3, *bush* in 3.4, *Kent* in 3.5.

RTH: And, and, and I don't want to ... I want us to be – and I don't want us to be more concrete about the wondering than it actually is. So I guess that my question is something like, am I musingly whispering "story" (or hearing it whispered one way or the another) but in a musing way? Or am I whispering "story" and *alongside* that ,somehow, I'm wondering what is "story"? Or maybe it's not possible to sort those things apart.

56:31 Joe: So I'm just trying to think about it So it's whether or not I was musing "story" as in like thinking what a story is, or if I thought the word "story" and then separately wondered what "story" is?

RTH: Right, that's sort of the question that I have around it.

Joe: Yeah. Yeah, so it was more the second one. It wasn't like I was musing "story," what's the story, which is why the word "story" appeared. It was more that the word "story" appeared as a whisper whether – I dunno, but again I dunno if I heard it or if I inner spoke it. But then I feel like *separate* to that there was a slight ... There was the wondering about what "story" is.

RTH: And that is occurring at the moment of the beep, caught in flight?

Joe: Yeah.

RTH: And so what that means, what that says is, is at the moment of the beep there's like *two* things going on. There is this hearing, speaking, whispering "story," *and* I'm wondering what's a "story."

Joe: Yeah.

RTH: Okay. And is the wondering what's the story prominent to you? Or is that at a low level?

Joe: It's not as prominent as just the word "story." So, yeah, the wondering about what a story is was definitely like not as present as just the word "story." Yeah.

58:17 RTH: But it's not just that I'm *inferring* that I was wondering about the word "story"? It's not just an *inference*. It's an *observation* of an experience of wondering?

Joe: Yeah. It was definitely a part of my experience as like the *what's the story?* There was ... Yeah. Mm.

RTH: So the distinction, or the comparison, I guess, that's occurring to me is between this beep and the first one, where in the first one, you were seeing part of your house, and by inference I understood it while the fact of the matter was I was wondering whether I should accept this offer or not, but that wasn't present to me.

Joe: Mm.

RTH: And *here* we're saying I'm speaking or hearing the word "story," and present to me, I'm something like wondering what's a story?

Joe: Yeah, that this was definitely present. Like compared to that, the first beep where it wasn't ... Yeah, this was definitely a present part of the ...

RTH: Okay.

Joe: The wondering was definitely a present part of the experience. I think, yeah. I dunno. Maybe it's ... Yeah, I dunno why, but ...

59:35 RTH: Well, the good news is we don't have to know why. And I would say about the method is, as this a good example of how we're trying to develop a way of understanding what you mean, how we should understand how your experience is, and we're going to do that by comparing this one to that one, and get as far as we can go. Which is always going to be limited by Joe's particularly idiosyncratic vocabulary and ours. But we can refine it to the extent that we can refine it and say, well there's a *similarity* between a thought process, but this one is more present and that one is less present. And I think we're on the track of narrowing things down.

Joe: Mm. Yeah. That sounds good.

RTH: So that's six. Shall we do this again?

Joe: Yeah, I'd love to it again if you guys are up for doing it again.

RTH: When would we like to do that?

Joe: Um ...

101:29 RTH: Same time?

Joe: Yeah, the same time works for me if it works for you. I was gonna say, I mean, because this is quite challenging, and um sort of I wanna say leaning how to do it, but obviously that's not quite right either, is it, does it, is it basically better to um keep these sessions like not too far apart? Because...

1:02:01 RTH: I would say *Yes*, in general. Sooner would be better than later. But life happens, and this...

Joe: Is two weeks okay? Or is that too far away?

1:02:14 RTH: That's fine with me. I would say one week would be somewhat better, but only sort narrowly focused. If you're distracted about something, and you've got to get something done or whatever, and you don't want to be doing it, then two weeks is *definitely* better.

1:02:14 Russ comments: DES can work only if all concerned come together because they *want*, as individuals, to be coming together.

1:02:36 Joe: Okay. I'm trying to think if I can...

1:02:45 RTH: It really comes, it really... The bottom line is: it's a matter of doing it when *you're* ready to do it. And if you're ready to do it on the 22nd, then that's when we should do it. And if you want to do it some other time, then *that's* when we should do it.

Joe: Yeah. Let's. The 22nd is good.

RTH: Okay.

CK: I'll do the same thing. I'll send out a Google calendar invite to all of us so it's in our calendars, and email you the day before to remind you.

Joe: Well thank you so much, everyone.

RTH: And I will send you the video anon.

Joe: Thank you. Thanks a lot, Russ. See you Cody and Amber. Speak soon.

CK: You're welcome.

RTH: See you later.