

Kerry 10.
Kerry Debrief Interview

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the December 19 debrief interview with Kerry that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/FXU9Xgti0H4>. In brown are conversations about the Descriptive Experience Sampling process that took place during the interview. In green are Russ's comments, and in blue are Julian's comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process inserted after the interview. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

JBK = Julian Bass-Krueger

MM = Mel May

Kerry = Kerry U.

0:00 Russ comments: This is a discursive conversation, with no guidelines or rules. For ease of reference, I have created marginal captions that loosely describe what we are talking about.

0:00 RTH: So our object today, I guess, is to give Kerry and Mel chance, or anybody to ask anything that they want to ask, make, have any conversations that they would like to have .(I think)

0:17 Kerry: Um, was the, was the, sorry, just as part of the debriefing, were the, um, sessions gonna be coded in a certain way, in the sense that they'd be like, oh, this percent was visual, this percent was, um, auditory, et cetera, et cetera, or is that separate?

0:43 RTH: So, and by as part of the debriefing, you mean today?

0:47 Kerry: Yeah. Or just whenever.

What is a "green meeting"?

0:50 RTH: So I think what I think what we've talked about in that regard is that we do have what we call a green meeting. And the green meeting is where we review all the samples. And that is not in my, at least in my head, what we're doing today. Today is a debriefing meeting where everybody gets a chance to make sure that they understand what we did and, and whatever. And we agreed that sooner or later we would have a green meeting. And in that green meeting, we would rate things, probably, and so we would be able to say such and such a percentage of visual stuff. But that would not be the overall goal. The main goal of that would be the main goal of the green meeting is to, is to make sure, as best we can, that we're on the same page as far as the *phenomena* are, and, and to *refine* our understanding of the phenomenon. So it could be that I would see it one way and you'd see it somewhere else, somehow else.

[Kerry: Mm-hmm.] And in talking about it, we would come to a new understanding of how these things emerged.

0:50 Russ comments: The formal name is the *Idiographic sample review meeting*. We often call it the “green meeting” because in that meeting, for each sample, we create brief *captions* that try to capture the essence of the experience. We generally write those captions in green font.

1:50 Kerry: Cool.

1:51 RTH: And usually there’s some counting involved because people want, want us to count, but that, that it’s categorization and counting is not the primary aim. [loud static sound] I don’t think I did anything to cause that.

2:12 Kerry: Um, okay. Well, Mel, do you, do you have any questions to start with?

2:17 MM: Well, I feel like it makes more sense for you to start, given we just did, like you were the study of this experiment. So I feel like that’s a natural way to start if you wanna kick us off.

How do we know DES is accurate?

2:29 Kerry: Cool. Um, one of the first questions I wrote down, and this was, um, sort of related to the, actually the TV segment that, um, Julian sent around—the German TV. [JBK: Mm-hmm.] Um, but I wrote, um, “if we’re not the best judge of our own inner experience, how do we know that any of this is accurate?”

2:53 RTH: Well, I would say that’s the fundamental question of all introspection research. [laughs] And the, and the answer to that is I don’t, I, the first answer is I, I think we *don’t* actually know for sure. But then, *but* then I think we, we would, we would do the best we can, which is to say, well, in my, in my recollection of Kerry’s samples, she had quite a few inner, what we’ve called inner seeings where she described, uh, seeing a yurt or seeing a refrigerator or seeing whatever. [Kerry laughs] And, and I think if we went back and counted all those things, which I have actually done, I’ve actually, I shouldn’t say I’ve counted, but I have gone back through all the samples to, just spend 15 or 20 minutes today preparing to be able to answer any questions that you might have. And, and so you, I think you had quite a, quite a, you reported quite a few inner seeings. And that was quite different from Mel who didn’t report hardly any if, if I’m recalling correctly, inner seeings. [Mel nods affirmatively] And so the question be, the sort of the fundamental question is, well, *is Kerry’s inner experience different from Mel’s or do they just use different words to describe the same experience? Their experience is the same, but Kerry says it’s visual imagery and Mel says it’s something else.* And so the, and so the question becomes, *should we believe that Kerry’s inner experience consisted of a lot of visual imagery?* Is that really true? So I think that’s what your question is. Should, should we, should we believe that? And the answer is, well, it comes down to Kerry. For, so Kerry, do you, at the moment of the beep where we talked about things like yurt/cabins and, and, uh, refrigerators or whatever,

what's the possibility that at the moment of those beeps you were not seeing a yurt/cabin, or not seeing, uh, a refrigerator?

2:53 Julian comments: This is a skillful way to focus the answer. Going from an abstract debate on the method's validity to looking at a specific comparison—Mel vs. Kerry—and then to a specific sample—what's the chance that Kerry was not actually seeing a yurt during that sample? Validity is then built up idiographically, sample by sample, person by person.

4:54 Kerry: In my opinion, *no* possibility, but [JBK: Mm-hmm.] yeah.

4:58 RTH: So I think that's, I think that's the best we can do. So I think what we have done is we have, we have defined a moment as best as possible that we can define a, a moment (that the beeper is the best that we can do). If somebody had a better idea, we would be using it. And we have trained Kerry adequately, I think, in terms of paying attention to what's going on with her experience. And she says, believably enough. There was visual imagery there. And, and I think we understand what we're talking about. We have refined our language, so we've done everything that we can do to ensure that we know what we're talking about. And Kerry seems quite confident that it was that, that she was seeing a refrigerator at that beep and seeing a cabin/yurt at that other beep and, and so I find those, I find those reports entirely believable.

4:58 Russ comments: That is, the believability arises from (a) a principled method (refined to the state of the art), (b) the investigator's skillful application of that method, (c) adequate (that is, iterative) training of the participant, and (d) the investigator's and participant's avowal that the description is adequate. None of that is foolproof. But none of that is mere opinion, either.

5:53 RTH: But there are people I, there, there are philosophers who, who would say, *well, nobody has any inner experience. The only time you have any inner experience is when you're, when, when you're stopped to think about it.* And so the, at the moment of the beep, Kerry had... At the moment of the yurt beep, for example, Kerry didn't have any experience of the yurt. But when she knew she had to tell us, tell us about it, well, then she *made up* a yurt, right then on the spot! And she, and she did it so fast that she, she convinced *herself* that this was actually ongoing before the beep is concerned. And I don't think we can talk ourselves, I don't think we can, we can disprove that. I think that's *possible*. I don't think it's very likely, but I think it's possible. But, and even, but even if it's, that's, that's the case, if you buy that's the case, then you have to answer the question, well, why is it that Kerry would at the moments of her beeps, create in, in this instantaneous thing, create visual imagery, whereas Mel would *not*. Kerry and Mel are, seem quite different in that regard regardless of whether you see it as ongoing or made up on the spot.

Are there personality characteristics related to inner experience characteristics?

7:01 MM: Okay. So, um, in relation to that, one of the questions that I had or was just curious for your like, take on, Russ, and this is very much storytelling, contextualizing things. But obviously I think, um, Kerry and I are a nice combo because clearly our experiences,

the way we report them are like, y'know, *very*, very different and in some ways sort of polar opposites. So in line with what you are sort of saying there, one of my questions is like, to do with what we [she means Kerry and Mel] do for work. And I wonder whether you have found anything like this in your other, um, examples of DES in terms of, obviously I am a documentarian. I tell people's stories. And so much of how I pro (I know you hate the word *process*) but process the world is feelings based. Um, and there's no, like visuals in my head and all that stuff that we've discussed, a lot of how I see and think and process is feelings-based. And I think that allows me to be very good at what I do for my job because I don't have anything getting in the way of someone else's story. I, I take it in, I feel it, and I tell it.

8:23 In a similar sort of way, Kerry works in graphic design, visuals, language like that. And so she has this hypervisual brain; often, she processes things in a very visual way. And I, and that to me is like, *oh yeah. So of course you'd be a really great graphic designer*, and of course *I'd be good at what I do because I speak through feelings*. It's, so for me, there's so many questions there about like chicken and egg. And whether you have also found interesting comparisons between how people interpret, oh, people's inner experience and what they do for work, et cetera.

8:23 Russ comments: RE "a lot of how I see and think and process is feelings-based"
The word *feelings* is highly problematic, and this illustrates it. If by *feelings* one means *the experience of emotion*, then I think Mel's experience did *not* contain a lot of (or perhaps even any) feelings. However, if by *feeling* one means *general impression, vibe, inchoate sense*, then Mel's experience *did* contain a lot of feeling. The problematics is that when one utters "feeling," regardless of intended usage, the verbal community usually hears the experience-of-emotion sense. And that may apply to the speaker as well. So, for example, when Mel's speaking apparatus (whatever that is) creates sentences such as "a lot of how I see and think and process is feelings-based" or "*I'd be good at what I do because I speak through feelings*," the word *feelings* may have been intended in the inchoate-vibe sense, but once uttered, Mel may understand her own speakings as being about feelings in the experienced-emotion sense. I'm no mind reader; I'm pointing out that the use of *feelings* is often (including probably here) fraught.

8:23 Julian comments: I also think it's possible that Mel wasn't taking into account the full spectrum of her sampling. There were a few of her samples that had directly apprehended feeling. Post-interviewing, she may have elevated these in importance / perceived frequency. When we recently looked back over Mel's samples with her, she said she was surprised by the amount of nothing/autopilot samples.

This could speak to the importance of including participants in some stage of the analysis phase (or at least hear the results of it). Even after sampling, they might have an impression of their experience moments distorted by biases.

8:59 RTH: So I, I, I take that as what I would call a *personality question*. So the question is, is there some personality characteristic (what do you do for work or whatever, lumping that into personality) and some correlation between that and inner experience. And I'm guessing the answer to that is yes, but it's not,... but, but (a) I don't know the answer to it for sure. The... Personality studies require a lot of people: you're, you're

into the hundreds of people randomly selected from all over, and, and we just don't have anywheres near that, near enough data to answer those questions.

9:38 My recollection of your, your samples, Mel, is, is, and I I didn't review yours just before today, (I probably should have, I guess) but the, my recollection of your samples is that there were, they weren't *feelings* based, they were more *nothings* based or more, more, uh,

9:38 Julian comments: Concerning the relation between profession and inner experience, I'm reminded about what you wrote, Russ, about Jim Lincoln, a professional potter, who had mostly feelings, images, and sensory awareness.

There are many ways to explain this nonverbal characteristic of Jim's thinking: Jim's artistic profession is by nature nonverbal, so that he had selectively eliminated verbalizations from his experiences as he practiced his art; or the nonverbal nature of Jim's thinking is what led him to the artistic endeavor in the first place; or Jim's thoughts during the sampling period really did include verbalizations, but the beeper happened to miss sampling them; or Jim's sampled experiences were in fact verbal, but the beeper technique somehow disturbed his way of apprehending the verbalness of his thoughts; or our other subjects exaggerated the verbalness of their experience because verbal thoughts are easier to report; and so on.

For the present, these possibilities must stand as rival hypotheses to be tested. The most likely explanation seems to me to be some kind of feedback between his artistic endeavor and his inner experience: His nonverbal nature may have led him to pursue artistic activities in the first place, and the predominance of nonverbal activity diminishes the frequency of verbal thinking. While that hypothesis is attractive, it remains to be tested with other subjects. (p. 74 of Sampling Normal and Schizophrenic Experience, 1990)

The obvious, tempting thing is to say that Yes, for Kerry there's some feedback between her work as a graphic designer and her primarily visual inner experience. There's still reason to be cautious, though, and avoid jumping full aboard any theories. Maybe this is a claim Mel could more comfortably make in her role as a storyteller.

9:57 MM: Yeah, I was thinking about this today actually. How I, I never used this. I used to say vibes, it would be a nothingness and then there's a, a vibe, a concept or whatever, y'know, I know I'm, if I'm thinking something, y'know, there was a lot of autopilot. There was a lot of nothing. But if I was thinking of something, it was not audio, not visual, it was just a vibe is a word I used. But I think today I was thinking like a word I would probably use is like intuition. Like I would say my inner experience, I, I like that word to describe a lot of my inner experience when it's not that nothingness.

9:57 Russ comments: If Mel had used *intuition* instead of *feelings* in her 7:01/8:23 turn, then I would not have written the 8:23 comment.

10:37 RTH: And, and I think that's fair. I, I think intuition is a pretty good word to describe the way I recall your experience as being, if, if by intuition we mean, well, *I was obviously paying attention to the world. I wasn't thinking about it in any particular thematic way, but I was, I was obviously skillfully moving through the world*. You could call that intuition. I think that's a, I think that's a perfectly, perfectly good way. So the, the,

what I really think about the answer to your question is I'm, I don't think it's necessarily the case that Kerry's visual imagery makes her a good graphic designer, or your intuition makes you a good, uh, visual storyteller or whatever,

11:24 MM: Whatever you do for work!

11:25 RTH: [laughs] Whatever, whatever, whatever you do for work, right? So what I think is, is that the way your experience is colors the way you do for work; and Kerry's inner experience colors the way she does for work. And, uh, I, I don't, I don't, I, I, I think it would be possible for Mel to, if, if, if Mel's history had been such by accident that she ended up in the graphics design world, she probably could've done graphics design. And if Kerry's history had been such that she ended up with video whatever, she might've been able to do video stuff and uh, but she would've done it her way and you would, you would do it yours. Which, which is not to say one's better or, or, or worse.

12:16 All that said, I think we don't know the answer to that question. There, there is no doubt some reason that Kerry stumbled into graphics design and Mel stumbled into video production (or whatever we're gonna call that). And, and that, I think, has something to do with their, with your inner experiences, but it has a lot to do with a lot of other stuff, too, probably.

ADHD?

12:47 Kerry: I had a, a fairly similar question. [laughs] Um, but rather than asking that same question over again, a tangential version of it is, um, in the new year, I'm actually getting tested for ADHD, because this experience has helped me realize how distracted I am, like *all* the time. [laughs] Um, and I was wondering, and, and comparing obviously to Mel, is it even possible for someone who is so present and, um, intuition-based to have something like ADHD? Like, does that correlate in any way? Or is that just like an outlandish storyline to say?

13:42 RTH: So [pauses, mumbles, laughs]

13:46 Kerry: You don't wanna [laughs]

13:48 MM: Russ hates this. Russ hates this! [laughs]

13:49 RTH: A-D-H..., A-D-H-D is, uh, is a, a melting-pot diagnosis, I think. [Kerry: Mmm.] I think there's a lot of, there's a lot of probably very different people who get called ADHD [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] And, and that's not to disparage the diagnosis of ADHD. It's ... because we could say that about a lot of other things. But, but I what I guess the theme of probably what I'm gonna say about a lot of this stuff is that we don't have enough information about what actually goes on in inner experience in ADHD. I haven't done, I haven't studied ADHD. People haven't studied ADHD and the experience in ADHD in a way that I would find adequate.

14:35 Kerry: Mm, so...

14:38 RTH: I would, I would say, first off, I didn't find your experiences to be that you were distracted. And there, it did not occur to me at this beep, well, Kerry's, Kerry's distracted here. And Kerry's distracted there. And Kerry's distracted in this other. That was *not* my reaction to that. [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] And if you're comparing *your* inner experience to *Mel's* and concluding on the basis of that—well, I had a lot of visual imagery where Mel was just sort of present to what was going on in the world around her; therefore, I must be my, I must be distractible—[Kerry: Yeah] I'm, I'm thinking *that's not a fair comparison to make*, because Mel is more unusual than you are, [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] I think. Mel's lack of specific inner experiences was pretty unusual, whereas Kerry's particular kinds of visualizations were not particularly unusual. A lot of people have a lot of visualization. So I'm not, I'm not trying to diagnose your ADHD or lack thereof. [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] I'm just saying *don't go there because you think your experience is different from Mel*.

14:38 Julian comments: I was caught by the even-handedness of the reply. You admitted ADHD was a melting-pot diagnoses, but emphasized you're not disparaging the diagnosis and you're not diagnosing ADHD or lack thereof.

If I was answering, I would have found it difficult to be even handed. Partially from my own opinions about mainstream psychology, these overarching diagnoses of heterogenous populations, and the treating these populations with risky but profitable medications. I must admit I was disappointed when Kerry first voiced ADHD speculation. It didn't fit with my understanding of her experience (or probably my opinions on the psycho-pharma industry).

But I like the way that you answered in a way where you guided Kerry towards a different understanding of her experience, without being ideological. This is especially important when responding to someone for whom a psychiatric diagnoses is a potentially important part of their self-perception and identity.

Russ comments: At 12:47, Kerry directly asked me a question that I understood to be in the ballpark of, but not directly stated, *Do you think I have ADHD?* That presents me with a substantial dilemma. On the one hand, I think Kerry deserves a genuine answer to her question—I (we) have asked her to be genuine with us, and I think the only legitimate bargain is that I should be genuine with her. But on the other hand, for reasons that you describe among others, I think there is not an easy answer to her question.

RE "If I was answering, I would have found it difficult to be even handed...without being ideological."

I have frequently written my criticisms of mainstream psychology, so I suspect that I am at least as critical of psychology as are you; I suspect for both of us, the heart of the critique is psychology's treating people as objects (as in the psycho-pharma industry). As far as I have been able to determine, the only antidote to that is not to treat people as objects. Here, the task is to treat Kerry as a person, not as an object, and that entails (as it seems to me) recognizing that I don't know what Kerry's actual question is, I don't know what Kerry's actual situation is, I don't know what Kerry actually means by *ADHD*, I don't know whether Kerry's decision to get tested for ADHD is good for her, and so on.

Ideology, I think, is the presumption that I know the answers to all those questions—Kerry, like other objects, fits into my understanding of the world of objects.

RE my answer to Kerry:

I think, when rereading my answer to Kerry now, that it's a pretty good answer because it is indeed genuinely aimed at Russ and Kerry as real live individuals. I tell Kerry about *me*: I don't know about ADHD because I think we haven't studied ADHD adequately by my lights. And I tell Kerry about *Kerry*, limiting myself to *what I myself know* about Kerry* (the samples we have discussed together). And I try to answer Kerry's question in the way that I genuinely understand it from the point of view of my own actual expertise: don't judge yourself by comparing yourself to Mel.

*and don't know, which Kerry herself points out in her 15:52 turn ("there's a lot of other reasons why I've, I've come to this"). See my comment at 22:23.

15:52 Kerry: No, that's not, there's, there's a lot of other reasons why I've, I've come to this, it's been a, a long um, journey, but this has been like, I guess part of it, it. I've just been more reflective about how my thoughts work. Um, and it's, it's been a contributing factor to wanting to get tested. Um, but I just thought it was an interesting... It, I don't wanna make any like grandiose claims or anything, but just in the, in the, um, I guess in a similar vein to how you studied bulimia and like plurality of thought, I was wondering if there was any sort of correlation with ADHD and..

16:32 RTH: Not that I know of, but, but I, but I don't know. I, I think it would be a very interesting population to study. [Kerry: Mm.]

16:40 MM: I agree.

16:42 RTH: With, with the exception, with the exception that I think it is sort of a melting pot [MM: Yeah.] [Kerry: Yeah.] kind of a deal. So there's a lot of different kinds of people. So... [Kerry: Yeah.]

Am I a freak?

16:50 MM: But then, so sort of in a similar vein, like Kerry, I probably had the same existential crisis [laughs] that you're having as after this of, I had the opposite obviously of like, *wow, am I, like, am I like a bit of a freak and sort of like overly numb to the world in some ways* because there's so much nothingness in my inner experience? That I was like, y'know, I had, I had a friend that has a lot more, for lack of a better (this is, this feels like it's got negative connotations, but whatever) like chaotic inner experiences, y'know, lots going on. And we were sort of chatting about it. And she was like, yeah, but when I am rehearsing a conversation or like super-stressy about something and there's lots going on in there, that's when I know that this is like a really important thing. Or like that's, y'know, how I know that things matter or, or whatever. And I, y'know, whereas if I'm going into a really important meeting or something, like more often, no, like I, I *think* I'm just the same. I still just arrive and that's, it's the same presence. Anyway, so I had that thing of like, am I the odd one and am I missing out because mine's so quiet?

18:07 RTH: I don't think we know the answer. I I don't, I don't think we're, I don't, I'm, I'm sure I'm not in a place where I would confidently say "Mel's in a better place than Kerry" or vice versa. I, I don't think... there, there might be an answer to that question (I, I tend to doubt it), but, but I *would* say I, I would *not* characterize Kerry's experience as *chaotic*. Kerry had visual imagery going on a lot, but a lot of people have visual imagery going on a lot. *Chaotic* is when you've got three or four separate visual imageries going on at the same time, and, and, and they're, and they seem to be out of control in the, in the sense of, I don't want to be talking, I don't wanna be thinking about the yurt, but I can't stop thinking about the yurt. There was nothing like that in Kerry's experience that I, that I saw.

Anxiety and the *doing of*?

19:01 MM: But so in line with that, right, with discussions that I've had with friends, (and again, like, this is all I know, your science brain will be going nuts at that because it's all just hearsay chat!) but, um, y'know, my, in a similar way to Kerry asking questions about ADHD and things, like my brain asks questions about links with anxiety. Um, and I wonder whether you've done any sampling about that, about whether, yeah, people that report high levels of anxiety have particularly chaotic inner experiences, et cetera.

19:39 RTH: I have sampled with a bunch of people who have anxiety, and I *think* that there's quite a, quite a lot of different ways that can, people can have anxiety. So I don't, so it's more or less like ADHD (maybe, maybe worse, maybe better—I'm not really sure about that). But there are some pe there are some people whose, whose, whose anxiety is pretty clearly physiological where, where it seems that they get overwhelmed by something going on in their body and they get distracted by and, and that they call that *anxiety* and I think legitimately so. [MM: Mm-hmm.] But there are other people for whom anxiety is a, is a more, more an experiential thing. And it, and, and there, there it's experiential in ways that you just, you just don't know until you do something like DES. And I'm not trying to sell DES but I'm trying to say you can't believe what people are telling what people tell you about their anxiety.

20:38 So for example, I have sampled with some people who are anxious whose inner experience is populated by... in, in conversations, they, they have to, they feel like they have to go out and get each individual word. Like if I'm talking, you have to get this word, and then you gotta get that word, and then you gotta get this word. You gotta make sure you understand each word one at a time. And it's an active process where you have to go out and hear it. I call it, I call that *the doing of hearing*. You can't just... Most people when they hear the words come in and they understand 'em, and that's it. The doing of hearing I *think* leads to anxiety because it, it puts you in a, in a sort of a feedback loop which causes you to tremor and to try to trying to get, I got, gotta, gotta, gotta [simulates tremor]. And uh, so I, and, and I think those are very different kinds of things. One, one, y'know, they're, they're probably very different neural pathways, whatever, that end up being *called* anxiety. And so what I *think* is that if we had a well-developed science of inner experience where we really knew what inner experience was going on, then we, then we would probably divide up the world in different ways and we wouldn't talk about anxiety that would include both of

those things. We'd break the, break it apart into how, however, however, the experience manifests itself. But I don't, I don't even know *that for sure* because there aren't enough people who are carefully, care, carefully examining inner experience.

22:23

So the, the, the point that I was trying to make, which I don't think I actually made, is that the, per the, the person whose, whose inner experience had this *doing of hearing* phenomenon had no idea before the, before sampling that they were engaged in that. So if you asked them how to explain their, their anxiety, they would said it was free flowing anxiety. And, uh, but it seemed pretty clear *to me* when we were, when, when we were done that the anxiety came from this meddling, meddling with the experience.

22:23

Julian comments: My next thought is to wonder what to do with information like this. If you find that someone with anxiety experiences *the doing of hearing*, is there a way to use this information to try to alleviate anxiety?

You've said before that DES shouldn't aim explicitly to help people. That can interfere with faithfully looking at experience. But I wonder if DES samples could be provided and explained to therapists, the same way that X-ray technicians present their images to surgeons. I could see DES practitioners as the radiographers of the psychological world.

On a personal level, I (at least perceive myself to) experience a lot of anxiety and see it as plausible that there's some *doing of* in my experience where it's not useful. When I try to change this, though, I end up with *the doing of not doing*. So far, not very effective. Of course this involves all kinds of self-guided introspection and meddling with experience, so it's ill advised, but I couldn't help trying. I wonder if actually being a DES participant would be useful for me.

Actually, now it strikes that a better approach could be the opposite. If someone often experiences the *doing of hearing* you could say "alright, next time you catch yourself doing that, just try to do the complete opposite. Purposefully think of random stuff. Try to pay as little attention as possible" (inspired by dialectic behavioral therapy's Opposite Action principle). The idea is that it takes pressure off, and an anxious patient might find that they end up naturally paying attention to what someone is saying rather than straining to grasp it.

I do think there are ways to integrate DES with therapy. I'm not sure the best way to go about this and to what extent DES researchers should be involved. Basically, given your findings *where do you go with this information* both on a personal level and as a researcher?

Russ comments: RE "you find that someone with anxiety experiences *the doing of hearing*"

I have seen this phenomenon often enough that I am confident that the *doing of hearing*, or speaking, or other action, that is, the intentional meddling with one's own experience, is indeed related to anxiety, at least for some people.

RE "You've said before that DES shouldn't aim explicitly to help people"

That requires some context, because in a hugely important way, everything that I have ever done with DES arises from my own aim to help people. I have spent considerable time and effort at trying to understand what helping people genuinely

entails, and in a nutshell this is my conclusion: “Helping people” means assisting them towards what is good for them.

I’m no Biblical scholar, but I take seriously Genesis 2:17—“of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” In that spirit, which I fully accept, I don’t know what is good for Julian; I doubt that Julian knows what is good for Julian; I doubt that the dialectical behaviorists know what is good for Julian; I doubt that it is good for me, or Julian, or the dialectical behaviorists to try to know what is good for Julian. There probably *is* something that is good for Julian, but in my (perhaps wildly incorrect) understanding, the task is *not* to *know* or *try to know* what that good is (not to eat of the tree of knowledge), but instead to endeavor to incline yourself toward the (accepted as being unknown) good. To incline is more or less like a compass: the needle doesn’t know where north is, but it can point in a direction that is some combination of magnetic north and the distribution of ferrous metals in the immediate vicinity; and then later point in a direction that is some other combination of magnetic north and the now distribution of ferrous metals in the now vicinity; and over a course of such inclinations one may advance closer to north.

What I have said is that DES should aim at fidelity of apprehension and should bracket anything than interferes with fidelity. *One* of the many things that interferes with fidelity is the intention to help people, and therefore the intention to help people should be bracketed.

I can imagine that *somewhere in the future*, when the ability to apprehend inner experience with fidelity has become accepted as a desirable skill and the scientific evaluation of that skill has matured, the DES-like apprehensions of inner experience may, as you say, become, like X-rays, seemingly useful contributions to health and well-being.

Now, when I incline myself (as best I can) in the direction (as best I can ascertain) of what might help people (as best as I can figure it), I find myself trying to help people (as best I can) apprehend their inner experience. Is that a good thing for me or for them? I don’t know. It does (as best I can tell) align with the *know thyself* intention of those who are (as it seems to me) the deepest thinkers about what is good for people.

RE “When I try to change this, though, I end up with *the doing of not doing*.”

I see no way around that, so I wouldn’t offer such advice. It does seem to me that developing the skill of apprehending inner experience as it genuinely is (which is the center-of-the-target aim of DES both as interviewer and participant) has the byproduct of diminishing the *doing of* or otherwise meddling with experience.

Julian comments: I see how there are many assumptions in what I wrote about what is good or bad. For example it seems that anxiety is bad, or the *doing of hearing*, or the extreme fragmented multiplicity that often precedes purging for people with bulimia (elaborated in our commentary at 48:45). But these are assumptions. Maybe these experiences are intrinsically unpleasant and undesirable. Maybe they are reactions to other threats and issues, more like symptoms, and that trying to make them go away will not increase well-being. So I’m on board with your concerns that to do DES well you have to be descriptive and you really can’t pick favorites.

That is why I brought up the radiology metaphor. Radiologists try to be descriptive. They'll describe a broken bone but won't recommend for or against any surgery. So I do see the point of why it's good for DES-ers to be separated from theories about mental health.

And I understand your focus on building the method rather than making bridges to other disciplines. In your mind it's not mature enough. We need to better understand experience and try to build psychological science around that.

I (and maybe you) also think it's not just that DES and the study of inner experience isn't mature enough. It's that psychology and therapy and all of that isn't mature enough. It's grown out of theories and conjectures and still in its infancy from the pretty wiggly stuff that came out of Freud and co about a century ago. Adapting DES to therapy in some way contorts it.

But I also think that the world doesn't care how mature the science is—it goes on anyways. People with extreme distress want to feel better. Someone with a broken leg will want to get it snapped back into place. Likewise, a lot of people in the world want some appeasement in their inner lives. They'll turn to whatever gives the most promise. So I think that as long as therapists are treating people and psychiatrists are prescribing meds, they should be going off the best data. I think DES offers the best data we currently have.

I think that doing DES alone can be remarkably helpful for many. Getting a glimpse into ones self, with little distortion (or at least that's the goal), can be intrinsically helpful. I don't think it's the only thing that can help. I think there's a lot from psychotherapy, physical therapy, psychology, psychiatry, meditative practices, whatever that can be adapted to form a mature science.

I want to go back to my Dialectic Behavioral Therapy conjecture to before. That framing was a stretch. The *do-the-opposite-of-whatever-you're-trying-to-do* technique came from a therapist of mine and was helpful to me at times. But I didn't want to make my writing too personal so tried to look up what field or therapy that technique came from. I'm not even totally sure if it's DBT.

This to say what I think is useful in psychology will not come from any one field or therapeutic approach. I think a more inductive study of what goes on in therapy sessions, which specific interventions are made in each session and what is the patient's experience following the session could be useful. Of course there are all kinds of complications and because of the private nature of experience, it's maybe harder to entangle efficacy and causality than with physical ailments (a broken leg for instance). But I am curious, for instance, about the practices of the therapists who worked on DES projects with you.

To wrap things up, I'm not sure of my role with DES yet. I fully understand your role as a purist. That's what's needed to further develop the method. I'm unsure if I'll fall into roles as a communicator or a connector to other disciplines. Or maybe being more of a purist is right for me too. But I do think there are connections to be made and sooner or later someone's gotta do it.

23:01 JBK: Did, did you just find doing of hearing or have you found other kinds of, like doing, of talking, doing of watching, doing of moving?

23:01 Russ comments: I think I never really answer Julian's question, so I will do so here: Yes, I think there are doings in other realms, where by *doing* I mean meddling with the

experience itself. So, for example, Kerry's visual imagery (her yurt, or refrigerator, or dog with crown, etc.) just seem to happen, unbidden. That is the way most people experience visual imagery. But some people do actively meddle with the imagery process—they might try to turn the yurt blue, or make it upside down, or remove it from the image. Such meddling (which I would call the doing of inner seeing) is not confined to *inner* seeing—there is the doing of (external) seeing, where people explicitly meddle with external visual perception—they try to blur a portion of the seeing, or bend it or twist it. But the doing of (inner or external) seeing does not lead to anxiety; it might lead to other kinds of disturbances, perhaps to psychosis. Or perhaps it wards off psychosis. There is, as far as I know, absolutely no careful observations on which to base such opinion. I have said for a long time that one of my greatest self-criticisms is that I have not studied the experience of individuals at risk for schizophrenia—I think there is likely much to be learned and perhaps much to be gained. [See the comment at 26:01]

23:09 RTH: Well, I think, I think most people think of themselves. I, most people, most people think of talking as, as being something that they *drive*—they're the driver of their own speech. And Kerry had a few examples where the words just rolled out where the, where she was the creator of the words, but she wasn't driving them at the time. She was thinking about something else or whatever, and the words just came out of her. And then there are other people, and this might be the exactly your question, Julian, where they feel like they have to say each individual word. Yes. That that can happen.

23:48 JBK: Do, do they call themselves anxious people? Or do they fall under that category, you think? Or is it like a mixing too much mixing of nothing called categories?

24:00 RTH: I, I think the answer to that is yes.

24:03 JBK: [laughs] wait to the first option or the second

24:08 RTH: They call 'em, they think of themselves as anxious. So what I really, what I really think about that is if you think of, of vibrato. Y'all know what vibrato is? Vibrato is the wavering of pitch that makes a, makes a singer singer's voice, sounds sound warm, whatever. The frequency of vibrato is pretty, is pretty fixed. It's like 7 or 8 hertz. And there are a few people who are up at 9 Hertz or whatever, like Joan Baez or BB King or something. But the, but most people, most people are in the seven or eight, 7 or 8 percent [he misspeaks: he intended 7 or 8 Hz]. And if you, if you, if you put your voice into a, a machine that can lower the, that, that can change the vibrato frequency without changing the pitch. So you can get the, the, the vibrato slows down to like 6, it no longer sounds like vibrato anymore. It's really sort of an annoying kind of a thing. So that, that, the point that I'm trying to make here is that I think 7 or 8 hertz is the dividing line between when you can *do* something, you can do something at 6 or 5 or 4 hertz. And when above that then it's, it's no longer a doing thing. It's a just a sort of a, a natural constant thing that you, that you perceive. Like the lowest tone on a piano is like, I forget, 12 or 16 or something like that Hz [it's really 27.5]. And, and you hear that sort of as a low A on a piano. Um, and anything below that no longer sounds like a, like a *tone* to you. It sounds like, like a vibration or something.

26:01 It also is the case that the vibe that the vibration of anxiety tremor is, I *think*, about 7 or 8 hertz. And I think that's not coincidental. I think it's that if you screw around with the doing of things then, then what is sort of the naturally the dividing line for humans between what seems like a constant thing and seems like a, a group of things then that makes you anxious. That's Hurlburt's theory of anxiety. I haven't, I haven't proven that, but that's, that's what I think.

26:01 Russ comments (continuing from 23:01): I think a mature science of inner experience *might* have to understand frequencies. The critical point for *movement* frequencies is 7-8 Hz; meddle with that and you get anxiety. The critical point for *seeing* frequencies is much faster than 7-8 Hz—I don't really know what it is, but it is more like 20 Hz (think how fast the saccades are). If you meddle with those frequencies, you don't get anxiety—perhaps you get psychosis of some sort. I emphasize I do not know what I'm talking about. I'm speculating in the service of trying to open the door a crack on what a science of experience might look like and why it might be important.

26:01 Julian comments: I could see how the frequency theory applies to physical tremors. How about more experiential anxiety? Do you think it's kind of like a mental tremor? E.g. for the *doing of hearing* you go out and try to catch the words, then go in and try to see if you caught them, etc.

Russ comments: Yes, I think it is something like that. I don't know exactly what, but I think a mature science of experience could sort it out.

Can you train inner experience?

26:39 MM: So in a similar vein, like again, I have a very quiet mind. I experience zero anxiety and never have and have been in incredibly stressful situations in my life and whatever, but it. So my, I can't help but then link those things for better or worse, Russ. But, so I wonder if it's possible, like have you got any, you probably haven't sampled anyone long enough, but can you *change* your inner experience or *train* your inner experience in ways to perhaps quieten it for people that experience anxiety? Or y'know, all sorts of things, but can you train it to be more manageable— like, I don't know, to be healthier for you or something?

27:39 RTH: Well, I, whether you can train it, I think is, I think that's a vitally interesting question, because I think the answer to that might be yes. And, and, and I think it might be yes in a, in, uh, in fundamentally important ways. So I, it wouldn't surprise me if, 50 years from now, people will have understood that we can train at least some people who become schizophrenic. We can see it happening early enough. We can and, and we can intervene with it early enough and teach, teach people how to do some stuff and they *won't* become schizophrenic. So I think there, I think there are dramatic, I think there's the *possibility* of dramatically, dramatic stuff there. What the, what those is, what those are. I don't know. I actually, I actually, my own personal private view of schizophrenia is that it has to do with the doing of things that are not in the auditory realm, but in maybe in the visual realm. So when you screw around with your visual stuff, the frequency is not, is not 6 hertz or 8 hertz or whatever. It's something else that gets you into, into difficulty.

28:50 I have seen in a *few* cases *dramatic* changes in inner experience sampling people, uh, miraculous, *miraculous* changes in inner experience. And it's not, it's not so much as the result of training (or I guess it depends on how you define training), but, but I think it is the result of, of taking a different view on your own inner experience.

The story of Fran (no figure/ground)

29:18 And the best example I've, I've got is a case is a study that I've written about a lot called Fran. Have I ever sent...? Have talked about Fran? It's worth telling that tell, telling that story to a storyteller. So it's, uh, Fran, Fran was a bank teller and, and, and seriously disturbed. And she had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, and borderline personality, whatever, depending on who the diagnoser was. And had multiple suicide attempts and the scars to show for it and hospitalizations. A seriously disturbed person. And she was a, a client of a psychologist friend of mine. And she, her, her presenting thought was that, her presenting *problem* was that she was, she had undesirable thoughts. And she was supposed to stop thinking about these things. She wanted to stop these thoughts. So he was trying, he, the therapist was trying a thought-stopping technique, which with her and a bunch of other stuff.

30:21 But one of the, the kind of thing was she was supposed to wear a rubberband around her wrist. And when she thought about something that was bad, she was supposed to snap the rubberband and that was gonna serve as this was back in the back in the day, this is a pretty old story, but back in the behavioral day, that was gonna reduce the frequency of undesirable thoughts. Which it wasn't working. And so he sent her to me, and she, and said, you might find Hurlburt interesting.

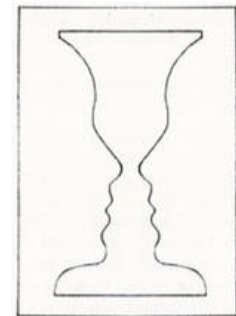
30:45 So we sampled with her and it turned out that, that her samples had multiple visual imagery. And by *multiple* like maybe ten visual images going on at the same time (she said!). And, uh, and these images lasted a long time, and by a long time we're talking like days for some of some of these things.

31:12 So Kerry's, Kerry's imagery is quite typical of the imagery that I've, that I've seen. It's there and is gone the next second or something, images last for, on the order of seconds, I would say. Hers [*Fran's*] lasted on the order of minutes or hours or days or whatever. And they were mostly un seriously unpleasant. So for example, she saw herself sitting at the dining room table and her father was standing over yelling at her and telling her that she wished that she had never been born. And it was totally visual scene. She could see through the doorway into the kitchen where her mother was standing at the sink looking back at her. And, and at the same time (she said) she had a visual imagery of her daughter sitting on the bed in her bedroom and telling her that she's a terrible mother. And at the same time she had a visual image of her refrigerator with a birthday cake that she had made for her daughter (it was in the refrigerator). And at the same time.... And, and the, the undesirable the father-image had been there—we, we saw this on several occasions. So it seemed like she said, I have this image all the time. It seemed like she sort of had it all the time. But, but, so this is back to Kerry's question. Well, why should you believe a report like that, y'know, this ten images at a time?!? How is that possible?

32:37 So at uh, at a particular sample, she had an image of a Mervyn's department store advertisement, and Mervyn's is like Dillard's or something like that. I don't know that they exist anymore, but back in the day, there were the, this, she had an image,

one of, one of her images was of this newspaper ad that was selling gold chains. Mervyn's was selling gold chains. And the, the, the ad had a bunch of teddy bears acro— arranged on the page and with chains hanging around their neck and around their arms or whatever. And so I asked her: at the moment of the beep, which one of these teddy bears were you looking at? And she said, well, I was looking at all of them. And I said, well, I understand you're seeing all of 'em, but at the moment of the beep, which one were you particularly aimed at? And she said, I'm, I'm not aimed at any one of them. I'm aimed at all of them. And I thought, well, y'know, she's crazy. This is not possible. And we know that there's figure-ground phenomenon, so she doesn't know what she's talking about.

33:34 So I said, well, we were this, (I was conducting this interview in McDonald's) and uh, I said, well, when you're looking at me and now you turn your turn and look at that cup that's sitting over there on the table, do you feel yourself sort of lose me and zoom in on the cup? You sort of get to the cup and make that center? She said, no, I don't, I don't do that. I, when I turn, when I turn my head like that, the cup becomes in the center of my visual field, but there's no sense of grasping things like, like figure ground phenomenon would be. So I drew her the faces/vases, ambiguous figure. You all know what that, what that figure is? It looks like this. [draws in the air—see figure] [MM: Oh, yeah.] Sometimes it's called a candlestick or whatever. And so, and people, some people, so people say: sometimes I see two faces looking at each other and sometimes I see a candlestick in the, or a vase or something in the, in the middle. That's a well-known ambiguous figure. I drew that and I showed it to her and I asked her what did she saw? And she said, I see two faces and a vase. And I said, yeah, I understand that, but *right now*, which one do you see? And she said, well, I see both faces and vase. And I said, well, people say these, they alternate for her. And she said, they don't alternate for me. There's no alternation. I see them both. So I'm thinking she doesn't know what I'm talking about, or I don't know what she's talking about, or whatever. Obviously they alternate.



34:58 So the next time I saw her, I came with armed with professionally drawn ambiguous figures, Neckar cube and Boring's wife/mother-in-law. And um, and I showed 'em to her and she, and she said, they, they don't alternate. None of them alternate for her. She said, so you've gotta wonder what the heck is going on with her.

35:20 But at the end of that interview, she said, uh, can I, can I have these? And I said, yes. So she took him and she called me up an hour later and she said, well, I went back to the bank where I had, where I work, and I showed these pictures to the, my coworkers at the bank, and they alternate for them. And then she proceeded to give me a totally lucid description of what alternation was *for her coworkers*. And then said, but that doesn't happen for me. So *that* for me said, it's not, this is not a language problem. I understand what she's talking about. She understands what I'm talking about. She's talking about her inner experience and it just doesn't happen, she said.

36:00 So at the end of maybe, maybe that interview or maybe the next one, I forget now that it's been sort of a long time ago. She said, I, I actually, I, I haven't been entirely honest with you. And I said, well, I'm interested in your inner experiences as detailed as I can get it, but, y'know, it's up to you. She said, well, I have this image that

I haven't told you about and it's been there for the last several days, but I haven't told you about it. And I said, well, I, I'd be interested in having you tell me about it if you would like to do so. And she said, well, I'll, I will do that if you promise not to tell my therapist. And I said, sure, I'll do that. And uh, therapist is a friend of mine, I figured I'd, I'd deal with, deal with that. But anyway, she, so and so, she said, well, I have an image of myself committing suicide [Kerry: Mmm.] Which didn't surprise me, but that, so I figured that was what was at it. So I asked her the same kinds of questions that I would've asked Kerry about her visual imagery, which was basically, well, what do you see? And she said, well, I see the bathroom door. And I say, well, is the door open or closed? And does it open to the right or to the left? And she answered all those questions: the door was open and it opened to the right and opened inward into the bathroom. And then the *next* scene in this, in this sequence, is that she sees her medicine cabinet, and it's already open and the, it's got all the medicine in it that it actually has. And it's just like a real medicine cabinet. And she sees her left hand reaching into the medicine cabinet. And it's just like a regular medicine cabinet, except it doesn't have quite so much stuff in it as a regular, regular medicine cabinet has. And then the next scene is she knows, she *knows* that she has taken downers and slit her, and laid down on the floor and slit her wrist and she's now bleeding to death on the floor. Maybe she's dead already. I forget, I forget on the floor. And so I'm asking, well, from what perspective do you see yourself dead on the floor? And she says, well, it's, my head is towards the door and it's looking, it's like I'm looking from the door in on, on myself.

38:09 So I'm asking the same kind of detailed questions that we would, that we have asked of Kerry's visual imagery. I'm asking about this kind of visual imagery. And she says, it's just like I, like I would be, if I were dead, I think, except I'm *whiter* in this image, then I think I would be in the, in the real world.

38:26 So we made a suicide pact (that was like five o'clock on Friday afternoon at McDonald's) and we made a suicide pact and, uh, that she would call me or call her a therapist or somebody or some, something happened and reschedule scheduled again for Monday. So on Monday she came back and she (which was good as far as I'm concerned), and uh, she said, I've had the best weekend that I've, that I've ever had. And her samples demonstrated that she no longer had ten visual images going on at, at one time. She only had one, maybe two sometimes, but a much less detailed or wild set of inner experiences.

39:10 And, uh, and she, she said, there's only one bad thing. Oh, I, I forgot, I forgot a part of this story. I gotta, I gotta back up. So I gotta back up to the part of where she was talking about the showing the coworkers, coworkers her, the, the ambiguous figures. She said in that interview when she was telling me about the coworkers, she said she and her coworkers discovered a couple of things that, that, that were important. One is she discovered why she pissed off her co coworkers. And the reason for that is that she, they would, that one of the jobs that they did was to stand at counter and count money, and she would engage them in conversation while they were counting, which was easy *for her*, and it caused them to lose count, and so they were pissed [Kerry laughs]. And she found that *they* had only one television set in their living room. She had three television sets in her living room and she watched all three of 'em at the same time. And they didn't alternate back and forth. She could watch three shows totally simultaneously. [Kerry: Whoa!] And she thought everybody did that and was surprised to find that her coworkers didn't do that. So I took the, I, I

take those kinds of things as being the kinds of, the kinds of reasons that I, (now I'm back the Kerry's original question, why, why should you believe it?) This person was a seriously disturbed person and she was providing me with evidence of the kinds of things that I could not po she could not possibly have made those up without, without being some kind of an accurate description of her inner her experience (I thought). So I should have told that story, that part of the story when I was, when I was, uh, talking about the ambiguous figures.

40:48 But now we're talking about the weekend and she says, I've had the best weekend that I've ever had, but there's one downside and that is I can only watch one TV again, one TV now. And *that* was a, a, a big *loss* for her. She enjoyed watching three different TV shows at a time, but I can't, I can't do that anymore. So her experience was borne out by the fact that now that now at the beep she has just one or two visual imagery and that stayed with her until she died. She died 10 years later, something like that, from a kidney failure.

41:25 So her, her experience, I think changed dramatically. And, and my *explanation* of that.... So it could be that it was, that I just happened to be there, y'know, that it was gonna change on that particular day. And I just happened to be there. I got... can't argue against that. I doubt it. What I think happened was that she was a seriously disturbed person *because* she in her childhood was abused in almost all manner of ways—sexually and verbally and whatever. And she learned not to look [covers her face as if to hide] wherever it is at anything because that bad shit was happening, [inaudible] coming from that direction. And so she, her, she fragmented her inner experience apart so that she, she took it in, but not, not one thing at a time. And so everything just came at her. And then when, when I happened along, and we happened to take a look at her suicide image, which was sort of the highly-est problematic image for her, and we looked at every single detail of that imagery, then she no longer was afraid of her own imagery. And so from there on out, she could look at her imagery and she *had* figure grand phenomenon. Oh, and the, the ambiguous figures now alternated for her after, after the, after that.

42:48 So, so that's the long way of answering both Kerry's and Mel's question as to why I think this is a, it's believable. And I think it, I think it would be hard to tell the story of Fran without saying her inner experience changed dramatically and that there was something, uh, high fidelity about, she has a lot of visual imagery that stayed around for a long time at the outset, and didn't have that afterwards. Now whether that's *training*, would you say it's training? I don't know whether I would call that *training* or not. I think, I think it was *something that happened* as the result of *paying attention to her inner experience as her inner experience actually was* that had a, what she would call, what I would call a miraculous effect on her.

43:38 MM: But, so that's fascinating cuz that's sort, like that, that story in it of itself is *fascinating*, so thank you. But like that's in line with my, my biggest question with this stuff is sort of nature v. nurture: is your inner experience--you were, you were born to interpret the world that way and that's how you are; and, and that's how you will always be. Or can you do things that adjust it and that story suggests that you can adjust it.

44:12 RTH: It seems, it seems to me that that story and others more or less like it indicate that at least for some people there can be dramatic changes in their inner experience. And, and for in, in the world according to Hurlburt, it comes down to if you see your own

inner experience, if you grasp your own inner experience, the way your own inner experience is, then sort of dramatic things *can happen* for *some* people. Who those people are, I don't actually know. She, her, Fran's current diagnosis at the time of this was borderline personality. And the, the field would tell you borderline personality is sort of the hardest thing to change. If you want, if you want to have a therapist, have conversation with a therapist about who are the hardest clients to deal with, borderline personality is gonna come, come up. And, y'know, is Mel [he misspeaks; he means Fran] characteristic of all, or some, or a few, or just one borderline personality person? I don't know the answer to that. But I don't think anybody else does either *because*, y'know, you gotta, you gotta spend a lot of time with people and nobody's doing it. I don't, and it's not just spend a lot of time with people. It's, you have to set up a situation where people can tell you about their inner experience with fidelity. And people aren't doing that.

44:12

Russ comments: I only half answered Mel's 43:38 question, so let me elaborate. I think of inner experience as a set of skills: Inner seeing is a skill; inner speaking is a skill; inchoate-vibey apprehension is a skill; and so on. Like all skills, inner seeing (for example) is some combination of nature and nurture, of genetics and practice, of reinforcement and suppression. I, for example, am never, was never going to be an American football tackle—I could have worked on the field or in the gym 20 hours a day, bulked up my diet, whatever, and I still wouldn't make it—it's not in my genes to build the required body type. On the other side of the coin, because of my body type, I never spent much effort *trying* to become a football tackle. B contrast, I probably *could have* become a pretty good golfer if I had applied myself to it, *but I didn't*, for whatever reason.

Kerry, for whatever reason, apparently had the genetic infrastructure (whatever that is) to support inner seeing, and she apparently practiced inner seeing, and has developed the skill of inner seeing. Mel has *not*, apparently, developed the inner-seeing skill, perhaps because she doesn't have the genetic infrastructure, or perhaps because (for whatever reason) she practiced non-symbolic apprehension strategies. We are a long way from knowing what I'm talking about.

But inner seeing *is* a skill, and it needed to be practiced as a child, just like bicycle riding is a skill and dressing dolls is a skill. I have written a bit about childhood inner seeing acquisition—not nearly enough but more than about anyone else—and I recommend Chapter 11 of my 2011 book.

DES changes people

45:39 MM: So then, and then on a smaller scale, like Kerry, you've reported this as well, that like we have found, and Julian, I feel like you've spoken about this too, maybe, of like in doing this, y'know, relatively short process on ourselves, we have like without over, overplaying it like sort of changed *as people*, fundamentally, thanks to the awareness of ourselves. Like you just know yourself in a new and better way, *I think*. So my question is about like how do you [laughs] this is a million dollar, quite literally probably Russ question of like how do you make it more accessible then, right? [there is a clanking sound] If everyone's doing it, sorry, my radiator radiator's going off. If everyone is, if everyone that's doing it or if people that are doing it are reporting positive outcomes of even just the act of doing it, how do you make it more

accessible? Because clearly not everyone can have your attention for an hour a week for 10 weeks! [laughs]

46:46 RTH: So I think that's a great question and and I'll, I'll answer that. Let me give a preliminary answer to that. And that is, there, there are a few, a few times when I have, back in the day when I was a working clinical psychologist, I have, I have tried to use descriptive experience sampling to change somebody's behavior. And so I, I had a guy, a, a client of another friend of mine, basically, who had anger management problems. And so he would bang his fist in the wall and say, "I don't feel angry, I just, I'm just banging my fist in the wall, y'know." Um, and, and we sampled with him and it was *not* successful in changing his behavior. And I think, my *theory* about that (and I don't, I don't know whether this is true or not, either), but my *theory* about that is, is that there's something about the purity of the DES method that is what is what is transformative. And by *purity*: it, if you, if you set out to change somebody's behavior, like therapy is about, y'know, therapy is the, the name of the game of therapy is to make somebody better. Then I think you, that it's no longer a pure thing. You're, you're trying to meddle with somebody. Whereas in the Kerry and Mel sample, our, our aim was to get Kerry's experience *exactly* as Kerry had it; and Mel's experience exactly as Mel had it. *Exactly* as a little strong but high, with as high fidelity as we can do. Pretty, what I would call pretty purely. And *that* (I think) turns out to be therapeutic or life altering or, or whatever. But it's, it, it *doesn't* come from the *attempt to change it*. It comes from the attempt at genuine apprehension, genuine understanding.

48:45 Now that's the preliminary. Now I'm gonna answer your question. Could you do that at scale? And the answer to that is, *I think probably you could*, but it would require building a sort of a lot of people who were, who understood that inner experience might be interesting if you could just get to it. So you could build, y'know... If, if the world were, were a kind of a place that recognized that inner experience is, is an important deal, then, then I think there, there might be a lot of people who could do it, who could do the Russ role for lack of a better thing. And those people would figure out who they are and, and they would have conversations. And, but the, the, the problem is I don't, I don't know how many people there are. I think, I think probably there could be a lot, I don't know how many you would need, but it's, but most people have, have preconceptions about the way things are, and it's hard to put that aside.

48:45 Julian comments: I see the argument for why DES shouldn't be conducted with therapeutic intentions. That meddles with the purity of the investigation. I don't know, though, if DES can supplant therapy. I'm curious about ways to integrate them. For example, therapists often work with grounding techniques. When someone's experiencing anxiety or distress, they can "ground" themselves by focusing on their immediate sensory present—whether it's their breathe, or touching on object in front of them, or looking at objects around. From DES, we know that people's inner experience can be entirely different. Some might have very high sensory awareness and some none at all. Different grounding techniques could be effective for different people. Or grounding techniques as a whole might or might not be effective for different people.

Also DES has striking findings about fragmentedly multiple experience for people with bulimia. A next step for me is to think: okay, how can we take this and apply it to helping bulimic people? Maybe there are certain kinds of exercises that reduce multiplicity. Maybe there's a way for DES to inform which of these exercises best apply to which people.

I think an eventual efficacy study (though that's far down the line) could do a lot to bolster the perception of DES as a reliable and useful method.

So I see your point that avoiding attempting to change behavior and experience is important for DES. I do wonder how it can tie into psychotherapy, a field that *does* aim to change experience. But I do think that much of therapy needs to be reformed and rebuilt around direct inner experience.

Russ comments: I think psychotherapy presumes to know what is good for a person, and *then* aims to change experience. Please see my Genesis 2:16 comment at 22:23.

People's inner experience is very different

49:53 MM: Or even just beyond that. I just think people don't know in all the conversation, like, that's how Kerry started on this, (sorry, this going off). Um, but like people just have no idea that there are different versions to whatever they know. Like any person I speak to is just like, their mind is blown at this possibility that we're all speaking different languages inside our heads. So it's just *that* that's the problem. Like there's, which is why we're, y'know, doing this and hopefully one day I'll turn it into something that enters the world. But like, y'know, it's just a, um, it, it's so crazy that it's this insanely different (like I love to describe it like that) all the, everyone's speaking a different language. That's how vastly different it is. We can understand that concept in, we know people that speak French and people that, and we can't understand that. It's exactly the same thing happening in our heads it seems. But like how that hasn't become a wider chat is crazy!

50:57 RTH: Unbelievable to me.

50:59 MM: It's crazy!

51:01 RTH: And when I... [RTH and MM speak at the same time.]

51:02 MM: Yeah, sorry you go.

51:03 RTH: When I wrote my, when I wrote my first book, which is now quite a long time ago [published 1990], I, I was worried that I was, that I had given away my professional life. I had written, I had shown that this was a good idea and I thought everybody would take this over and then Hurlburt would be lost in the dust as, as everybody else continued to do it. That has not turned out to be the case. [laughs] But, uh... And I don't, I don't understand why it is.

51:27 MM: Well, that was my question. Why is it that, do people, especially in your field, reject the idea of what your, of what DES is sort of finding? Or like why, why isn't it taking off [laughs]?

51:42 RTH: I don't know the answer to that.

51:45 Kerry: From a mass, like, like from get selling it to the wider public. I, I think part of the reason why therapy has taken off so much in recent years is because there's this obsession with improving yourself. Where I think at the heart of this is literally just simply understanding yourself *as is*. And so, I don't know, I, I think, I mean I can't speak to the like psych world, but I think in terms of like selling it to the mass public, you have to be a very curious person to wanna deep dive. And I think it benefits anyone who does it, but it the people who are gonna be willing to dedicate the time to do it, I think it's like, it's a smaller sample size, possibly. I don't know.

52:36 RTH: So Julian, were you gonna say something?

How to tell the story of DES?

52:38 JBK: Yeah, I had a question for Mel because you mentioned you, you tell people about this and you blow their minds. So I'm wondering how you, from a storytelling perspective, come at it. Like how do you start people in this conversation and, and engage them?

52:54 MM: That's a good, well, Kerry might be able to answer that, cuz I blew her mind with this originally. [Kerry laughs] Um, gosh. And you probably can remember how I told you that better than I can, Kerry. So I'd be curious, can you remember how I brought it up with you first? And then I'll,

53:07 Kerry: I saw you posted a story of wearing the beeper and I was like, I think I asked you, what are you doing [laughs]? [JBK: Mm-hmm.] Um, and because it looks like a Walkman. And, um, and we were out, I think at like brunch or something at coffee, and I had my other friend there, and I just remember, I think he opened with like my, my inner experience is that I basically have vibes, is how you described it. And I was like, hang on, what?!? [all laugh], what are you talking about? That can't be possible. I have, I'm talking to you and I have other thoughts like rolling in the back of my head and I've got like a visual over here. And how do you just have vibes? So that was, I think that would be, that to me would be the *draw* from a storytelling perspective. One thing to establish that *that's* possible. Then people are like, hang on, wait, but I experienced this. And then wait, how do you experience this? And vice versa. Um, because the, the friend I was with, she had a very strong inner monologue. I obviously have a mix of visual and audio, and then Mel's just complete vibes. [laughs] [: Mm-hmm.] So it's just, I think starting with this, starting with your experience, Mel, I think would be the hook because that made me be like, how is that even physically possible? And I obviously wanted to know more, which is why I'm here.

54:37 MM: Yeah. I think that's how I, I mean that's how I ended up, y'know, with you, Julian, and Russ, um, in the first place of... I remember reading an article, um, that, y'know, Russ was quoted in and or his work was quoted in and y'know, something like that. And I, I distinctly remember this (which is crazy because I have a terrible memory, um, which is probably related to my inner experience, but we digress). Um, [laughs] and I, I will never forget it. It was in Covid and I was reading this and it was about like, yeah, guess

what? Not everyone has an inner monologue. And some, and a lot of people were like quite visual and stuff. And I was like, what?!? What do you mean?!? And in a like, I'm neither of those things, really. And then so I remember, y'know, we're in lockdown, I was talking about it with my, my family and my dad I think now sort of believes me after all these years of doing stuff on it.

55:28

But he was like, *you're a liar!* Like you're trying to craft this like, *oh, I'm a creative, I don't have an inner monologue*, because he just couldn't, he could not fathom what I was saying. So that's when it was like, no, no, I can't fathom what *you're* saying. So I think my curiosity with the whole thing stemmed from the fact that my experience seems to be so vastly different and extreme on one side of things to a lot of the general public that perhaps falls into this bit. Um, and then the more this has gone on. So, so that's how the chat starts, I think, Julian, with people of my own experience being so intuitive based and certainly no signs of inner monologue—that fascinates people. And then, so like the longer *this* has gone on, and the more I reflect about the way to tell this story in a documentary format and stuff like that, um, I have come to realize that it's gotta be autobiographical, I think. And that was not my intention leading into this, but I think certainly that's what makes the most sense, that it's sort of me learning about *myself* in order to then open up this whole chat. And that's where, yeah, again, I, I think a lovely way to sort of sum all of that up is how, um, we're all speaking different languages within, y'know, our inner experience is just a different language. I think that paints a picture very quickly for people. It's like tangible.

57:02 Kerry:

Also just from a storytelling perspective. I don't know if this like fits in at all, but I remember right after having that conversation with you, Mel, in New York, and I was mind blown, it actually made me reflect on my previous relationship that I was in, cuz I used to always ask my ex-partner, I used to say, "what are you thinking right now?" He'd be looking off in the distance and I'd go, "what are you thinking? What are you thinking?" And he'd always say, "nothing." And in my head I was like, *he's lying to me. That's not possible!* And then hearing Mel say that sometimes, or most of the time she's not thinking anything, I was like, it just completely opened up, I, I, I just, I didn't think it was physically possible to do. And I'd been telling that story to myself because I, I'd only been inside my own head. I can't be inside my partner's head. And so her saying that completely made me re, re-evaluate how I interact and speak with people, friends, family, partners, et cetera, cuz it, it just, I just didn't think that that was even *possible*. So

58:06 RTH:

I think so the chance, the chances are good, he was lying to you! [they laugh] because, because there aren't too many people for whom, who really have nothing going on. [Kerry: Yeah.] And, and it also, it also demonstrates why the *beep* is important. Because your *question*, well, "what are you thinking about right now?" That question takes a second to articulate, and by the time you get to the end of that question, you can wipe out your, your partner probably could wipe out what was going on in his inner experience. And so by the end of that question, then they, the end, the an, answer is *nothing*. [Kerry: Mm.] But it's also quite possible that he doesn't wanna tell you what he was actually [Kerry: True.] going on with him. I don't know him or you or whatever. I'm not, not trying to cast any aspersions here.

58:52

But I do wanna double back and answer Mel's, speculate a little bit about Mel's question about why, why hasn't it caught on? Or something like that. And I think, one... I speculate about this, I don't know whether this is true or not, but my speculation is: we live in an age that is, that is materialistic as opposed to, uh, genuinely interested in something that might be true, or something like that. So it's how much money does it make for you? How much power does it accrue to you, rather than how, how much you are genuinely aligned with the actual world or whatever. And, and I *think* that is the world is, is not *always* that way. I think it, I think it is that way for our generation, my generation, your generation, all of the last number of years, we have leaned heavily in that direction. But I think there have been cultures where, where inner experience has been, has been totally accepted. And meditation, true, genuine meditation is, is the centerpiece of everybody's existence.

1:00:03

It's not in our, in ours. So the, so that's one: we're, it's uphill against the, against the materialistic view that has us by the short hairs, I guess you could say.

1:00:24

And uh, and then the other thing I would say is that I, I give talks about this kinda stuff around the world and to psychologists and other people and, and, and almost everybody is *totally* interested, it seems. There, I tell some of the same kinds of stories. I'd tell a story about Kerry or Mel or somebody, and I, people would find that genuinely interesting. But those psychologists hardly ever do anything about it. They, they indicate that, yeah, that this would be really important to me, but that, but then they don't do it. And I don't know the answer to *why* they don't do it, but I *suspect* it's because they're driven by the materialistic portions. And it's, it's just so much easier to give a questionnaire to somebody and then you can publish it and then you can get tenure and promotion and raises and whatever. And, uh, it takes too long to do the kinda stuff that we're doing here. But the, but the answer, but the result of that is then you don't find out anything genuine. [Kerry: Mm-hmm.]

1:00:24

Julian comments: I tried to think through reasons why it hasn't caught on. And I should clarify that DES has had success. Most new scientific methods get at best a few citations. For DES, there have been *New York Times* and *New Yorker* articles, podcasts, collaboration with interested researchers across the world, and the convening of a US graphic designer, Australian producer, and Vienna-based-DES-apprentice to talk about it. We all just see the potential as much vaster. So what I came up with:

- It doesn't fit into established research communities. This comes from Russ doing his own thing for so long. It's an entirely new method. It's not like a new form of brain imaging analysis which a neuroscientist could pick up. It's a completely new thing. So its success would depend on other researchers being able to adapt it to their goals, or else building up a community from scratch (of researchers, engaged funding bodies, interested academic selection boards).

- It's qualitative in a quantitative world (most of the funded psychology PhD positions I see are in neuroscience or are AI related)

- It's too quantitative and rigid (that darn beep) for some of the more loosey-goosey qualitative or theoretical types.

- It goes against researchers' pet theories. (This is in line with what you say about materialism. Most researchers these days aren't willing to really engage with something that disproves their theories, aka that gets in the way of career progression.)

- It's time-consuming and hard to do as you mentioned.

-It goes against industry. Pharmaceutical companies fund studies and degree programs, and their interests may not align with a method that questions established diagnoses.

-It goes against a popular trend of seeing ourselves with fixed noun-ified identities.

-It's hard to understand. We're not used to looking at experience in this way, even if it's central. (Certain things are easier to convey, like inner speaking, because the notion of an inner monologue is prevalent in pop culture. That can spark interest, but then I find it still takes quite a lot of work to convey the scope of the experiential present that DES is interested in. And to convey trickier things like unsymbolized thinking).

-It's hard to understand why it's hard. In most of the viral conversation I see online, people are interested and then go straight to talking about their own experience—*that's crazy! I always have a voice in my head*. It's very hard to convey the deeper point of what DES shows—that we really have no idea until we do it. I think that's why many don't go much past the initial spark of interest.

-Russ is more into truth than selling.

The first part of this list is mostly why it hasn't caught on in academia. The later points apply both to academia and the broader popular culture. I think academia has many more roadblocks than popular culture, so I think the latter front is hopeful.

Russ comments: RE "It's qualitative in a quantitative world"

I do not consider DES to be qualitative—instead, DES is descriptive, which for me is a big difference. Most qualitative research is, like, most quantitative research, validity based. Validity-based research tries to answer a theoretical question: does the theory apply here or not. By important (to me) contrast, DES tries simply to describe what is there, in as theory-free a way as possible.

RE "reasons why [DES] hasn't caught on."

I agree with your list. My short answer: (1) Follow the money, particularly the short-term money; and (2) Recognize the ascendance of the objectification of humans.

1:01:24 MM: But I do think, but I think it is a million-dollar question at the moment. I think if you wanna go down that route, I think there's plenty of money to be made if you could solve how to make this available to the masses. I think, y'know, as Kerry rightly pointed out, therapy is more common than ever, I presume. It feels that way. And there's an... and, and people are becoming more lost than ever, sort of in line with what, in line with what you were saying, Russ, in terms of, I think we're in this era *culturally* that there's less, um, y'know, study of the self happening, and people are more lost than ever. So I think it, with successful storytelling and creative thinking about how you could make these sorts, a tool like DES genuinely accessible to masses, I think that you could find a way to make that commercially attractive as well as like for the greater good of society. Because I think the more you know yourself, the better you are at all these things. You show up better relationships-wise, you can be better at whatever finance job you do or whatever. Like, I think if you sell the story right, it can be attractive.

1:02:40 RTH: So I, I, I agree with that. And, and on some, on, sometimes when I reflect on my career and what, what, what, what I did wrong in my career, it was that I *didn't* do that. That I, so I, I *have* been through my career sort of reluctant to do that because I've been thinking, I have thought that the genuineness was more important than the economic benefit of it. And I'm, I'm a university professor. I'm, I'm adequately paid for what it is that I do. It seems to me that the, that the, my task in life or whatever is, is to try to get to the genuine truth about whatever and let the state of Nevada pay me for to do that. And there are times when I think that that was a mistake, because I think it's possible that had I made a genuinely that had I made this genuineness more economically viable, that then I could have had more influence and maybe turn the pressure up, turn the direction of, turn the tap on towards more inner experience. I think that's quite possibly true. I don't know whether it's true for for sure, cuz I think it's also possible that, that it would've demon, demonstrably cheapened it.

1:04:01 So, so I can, I can sleep easily thinking that Kerry has a lot of visual imagery and Mel doesn't, and I'm pretty sure that that has not been fucked up by my trying to get more money out of Mel or out of Kerry, or [MM: Mm-hmm.] or out of the process. But whether that was the right thing to do or a good thing to do or, or not, I don't, I don't actually know.

1:04:32 Kerry: It's very interesting.

1:04:39 MM: I'm trying to think if I have any other questions. I mean, I have a million obviously, but

What surprised you?

1:04:47 Kerry: My only other question was, and I obviously didn't sit in on, um, Mel's sampling, but are, was there anything that either Mel or I described or said that surprised you in any way? I feel like *no*, because you've done so many samples, but I just wanted to ask.

1:05:05 RTH: Well, I think we had to work pretty hard with Mel to make sure we understood about her lack of otherwise inner experience. That was, that was hard, fairly hard work.

1:05:24 Kerry: Is, is Mel on, not to say that it's a spectrum, but on the far, far end of the spectrum of, um, unsymbolized thinking, like, is she like really far on that end where it's just not much happening? [laughs] Sorry if I'm phrasing that offensively!

1:05:47 RTH: [laughs]. So in my, in my world, unsymbolized thinking is *not* nothing happening. Unsymbolized thinking, unsymbolized thinking is a *directly apprehended* thought.

1:05:55 Kerry: Yeah.

1:05:56 RTH: Every, every bit as y'know, I, so if you had, if you had *said* to yourself, "I wonder where this cabin is on Mount Eldora," [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] said that in inner speech, or you could have thought *I wonder where this cabin is* but no words or whatever, but every bit as directly present to you, *I'm wondering where the cabin on Eldora is*—that's what unsymbolized thinking is. That was *not* Mel. Mel did not have that kind of thought process. Mel had more nothing than, than a, and than an articulated thought, even

though that thought was not articulated in words, which is the hard part because Mel's been talking about like, well, "it's in different language," but it's, it's way more three dimensional than just different language. [Kerry: Hmm.] It's the hard part.

1:06:48 MM: And so, um, I, I would, and then like, y'know, obviously you reflect on your own behavior and whatever. And so a link that I made was like, I've always, y'know, I don't, I don't actively meditate, but if I went to a yoga class or, or like, y'know, and they make you meditate, like I'm brilliant at it. [JBK laughs] And that used to really annoy my housemate who has like, y'know, maybe something close to borderline personality disorder. Like she had a lot of, and so we would go together and the teacher would be like, y'know, tell us your, I was like, yeah, I smashed it. I just, y'know, two seconds in *Yeah, there's nothing going on*. [Kerry laughs] And she's like, *how can you do that?!?* [Kerry: Yeah.] And it's, because it's like my always, and so I say that to people of like, when trying to explain my nothingness, it's like a meditative state or pretty much all the time it's nothingness, as Russ is saying, it's not... Yeah. For better or worse, I think, too. I think people have this habit in me talking to people. People have a habit of romanticizing it. And I'm always cautious of that because I, as I said earlier, I reflect on whether I'm missing out on certain things as well. I think it's really easy to be like, *wow, a quiet mind! That sounds so nice, must be nice*. But I'm not sure it's that simple.

1:08:11 RTH: And I'm not sure it is. Which is why I've, I have tried in our conversation here today to be pretty neutral about whether your inner experience is better or worse or whatever than, than Kerry's. Cuz I really don't know the answer to that. I do think it is the case that people who meditate *a lot* have relatively quiet minds much of the time. I mean, is a skill that you, that one can master in the meditation world. [Kerry: Yeah.] Whether that's the same kind of thing that Mel's got, I'm not sure about that. It might very well be—I'm not saying it *isn't*. I'm just saying we need a lot more work to be able to answer those kinds of questions authoritatively,

1:08:11 Julian comments: I remember you saying (though I don't know if it was to us or to Michael Pollan or someone else) that the meditators you sampled with had sensory awareness most of the time. Mel's experience seems to be a quieter mind even than that. Or did I misrepresent that research? It would be interesting to see that released.

Russ comments: I don't have good enough records of that to release it, unfortunately.

Childhood memories

1:08:56 Kerry: As a, as a sidebar, Mel, what does, how does memory work for you? Like, if you're thinking...

1:09:02 MM: It doesn't. It doesn't.

1:09:04 Kerry: ...You don't have a single childhood memory.

1:09:05 MM: No, I have a terrible memory and No, absolutely not. Yeah. And then that freaks me out and I think that it's directly related. I do, I don't know what (Russ hates when I do these things) [JBK laughs] but like, I have no, yeah, again, people would be like, tell us

your earliest happiest memory or like, y'know, a memory from your childhood. I can't tell you one. I have a terrible memory, whether it's yesterday or whether it's my childhood. I know facts of my life. I know I studied at RMIT University. I know I grew up in Ballarat in a house that's this color, and it was on this street. I know the facts of my life, but I could, I think I'm very susceptible to [laughs] ending up in some cult [Kerry laughs] because I could easily be convinced of a different reality of my upbringing or my life because I can't, I can't.... I know it to be true, but I can't feel it. I can't remember it. I can't see it. Or it's, it's as if I, and like I read a book and I forget it straight away. Like I can't, but, so that's where, y'know, but everything is intuitive for me. So like, I definitely think everything that I've experienced in my life is relevant to how I show up in the world, or, y'know, very subconsciously that's how I'm I, why I make certain choices or whatever. Like everything has shaped me for sure. But I can't remember any aspects of my life. No.

1:09:05 Russ comments: Mel here states a theory that her lack of imagery contributes to or is the cause of her lack of memory. See the comment at 1:12:27.

1:10:30 RTH: So I'm, I'm, I'm guessing that's probably half true, and which half I'm not exactly sure, but I'm, but I'm guessing, so, so what, where was the house that you grew up in? Where was it located in? How, how old were you when you grew up there?

1:10:45 MM: Like I can't even an—, I can't answer that, Russ. I could not tell you how old I was when I moved into the house that my parents are currently in.

1:10:52 RTH: Approximately.

1:10:56 MM: 14.

1:10:57 RTH: Okay. And, and, and was it a one-story house or a two-story house?

1:11:03 MM: Well, it's one-story house

1:11:05 RTH: And uh, they have a driveway.

1:11:09 MM: Yes.

1:11:09 RTH: And did the driveway come down the right-hand side of the house or the left-hand side of the house as you're looking at it from the street?

1:11:15 MM: Okay, so if I tell, so right now, that house I'm thinking of this is interesting, is the house my parents currently live in. And I could answer all those questions. If I think the house before that, I can't answer your questions about what side the driveway was on and stuff.

1:11:30 RTH: So I'm, I'm not sure I could do that either. So I, I could make it up, but I'm not a, I'm not a hundred percent sure that I could, that I could do it. I'm guessing Kerry would put a visual imagery out, image out there. Yeah. And then it would be interesting to know whether we could alter Kerry's visual imagery. There's lots of work that says

that memory is me— memory is not retrieving, retrieving an image that has been stored away since Kerry was four years old or whatever. Me—, memory is stuff that's made up at the, at the time. When I asked you to remember your house, it wasn't like you were going back to in your some file drawer to figure out a picture of that and pull it out. But all that is to say, I don't think we know too much about memory, either. We, we, we, we know quite a bit about memory, but we don't know much about the inner experience of memory.

1:12:27 Kerry: Have you seen the, there's a Netflix special narrated by Emma Stone, um, and they do different, they focus on different things, but they have one episode on memory. Have you seen that, Russ? [RTH: No.] I feel like you would really like it. They tell this story of a girl who was quite young when 9/11 happened and she was living in New Jersey and she has this like, distinct memory of looking out the window and seeing the Twin Towers collapse. But they went back to her apartment that she was staying in when she was that age, and there's no window facing, um, across the water to the, the Twin Towers. What they anticipate, or what they [RTH: interpret] interpreted was that she would've been watching the TV, but she remembered the TV as a window in her mind, which is really interesting. But she, it's like, so it's a, obviously it was a horrible day and it, it's like a, a memory that's burned into her brain and she sees a window in, in her brain. [RTH: Right.] But it's not possible.

1:12:27 Russ comments (continuing from 1:09:05): What makes Mel's self-theory and Kerry's Twin Towers story difficult for me to interpret is that I think to really understand these kinds of claims, science would have to examine how, or whether, or to what extent particular characteristics of inner experience affect particular kinds of memory. But there has been little or no scientific interest/effort in discovering inner-experience characteristics in a way that I would think is adequate. Is the 9/11 girl a frequent visualizer, or is the 9/11 image an unusual event for her? What really are the characteristics of Mel's memory, and do other people who frequently have (like Mel) little or nothing in experience have memory characteristics similar to Mel's? I'm very sure science doesn't have the answers to those questions because I know what it takes to determine the characteristics of Mel's or the 9/11 girl's inner experience, and there are very few investigations that take that seriously.

I think it is quite possible that people with much imagery are very confident about their memories but are more mistaken about them than is Mel. I'm not claiming that to be true; I'm stating it as the counterpoint to Mel's theory and accepting that neither Mel nor I know whether or to what extent the theory holds.

1:13:31 RTH: But it's not a memory and it's probably not, it's probably not constant. So it seems like it's burned into her brain. But it, what, what happens is that when she recalls it, it feels like it's burned into her brain. [Kerry: Yeah.] Ten years from now, she'll recall something that's *different* and she will say, *that's* burned into my brain. [Kerry: Mm-hmm.] So that, so me, that that's, I think that is the way memory is. Memory *seems* like it is something which is *retrieved* from 9/11, but it's not. It's *made up* on, in 2024 *as if* it were retrieved from 9/11.

1:14:00 MM: Yeah. And so to that point there, like when you say burned into your brain, right? The reason then I struggle with memory is because of the way that my inner experience is

in terms of this nothingness and there's no audio-visual stuff to grab at or whatever. I think that's directly related.

1:14:17 RTH: Could be. [Kerry: Yeah.] Could be. So, so back to your orig, back to your, your other question about why isn't it, why isn't it more, more, why isn't DES more available? You, Mel, you have or we have, we all have, or at least Julian and Mel and I have, we have, we have sort of a case study, because *Julian* came into this study thinking that he knew about DES. [JBK laughs] And, and *now* I think he would tell you [JBK: Little did I know.] that he, that he wasn't [laughs], he wasn't so he wasn't so sure about it. He, he was pretty sure at the beginning, I think. So it takes, it takes, there, there is a, a total case study to be made about, about how, what it, what it takes, what, what it takes to figure out what DES is actually, actually about. And that, and that, y'know, that there's a lot of stuff there. It's what, what Julian thought that was mistaken about what I had written, and what I had written and that was actually mistaken, and what I hadn't written, and what I, what I had written ambiguously. I'm not blaming anybody here. I'm just saying that the, that the, the challenge of doing DES is, well, at least for *some* people, takes, takes, takes some *undoing* before you can then learn how to do it. And probably for everybody, including for me.

Learning to do DES

1:15:50 JBK: I have a question about [RTH: Go ahead] Yeah. I was wondering if my struggles are common struggles or if each person has their own struggles when they try to do DES. Cuz I think for Mel it was, we called it meta things. Like I was, I was asking about the content of Mel's experience and Mel would say "I was watching a movie," and I would try to ask like, "well, what about the movie? Like, what was happening?" And Mel would say, "I, I didn't write it down, it's not so important." And then I would, then I would think, *oh, well the content wasn't part of it*. And then Russ would say, "no, the content *was* part of it—Mel was absorbed in the movie or absorbed in the conversation." But you just weren't like, singling out any one thing. Like, so, so that was my struggle there. And for, for Kerry, my struggle was I would, I would talk about like mental images. Like I would talk about you looking at a or seeing a mental image, and Russ would say, "it's not an image. [Kerry: Mmm.] Kerry is seeing a dog. She's not seeing an *image of* a dog. There's no like, separation between you and like this image of what you're seeing." So yeah, I was wondering if those are common problems, or if everybody has like different problems.

1:17:04 RTH: So they're, they're very common problems. Everybody has their own take on, on, on them. *You*, in my experience are, are, were more difficult than some people I think in, at least in part because you had read more about my stuff before you read, before you met me. Whereas most people that I've, that I meet are pretty ignorant about what I have written. And so they don't have, they haven't, they haven't developed a, a take that's, that's actually sort of at an angle from what I would really, what I really was trying to say when I said whatever it is that I said. But nobody finds it, nobody finds it easy.

1:17:49 And, and I don't know whether that's my, this is my problem either, Mel. So this is part of the, part of the deal. If, in answer to your question, so if I had, let's say in 19, 2001, let's say in 2001 I had created an institute and, and, uh, and got people to pay to

come to talk to me, and then I hired a bunch of therapists or whatever, a bunch of people who would, who would take the interviewer role. Could I have trained people to do what I do well or better than I do it? I don't know the answer to that. I would say in the way that I have done it, I have, I, I think most people think that they're not as good at it as, as they would like to be, and even after they've spent quite a bit of time with me. And I don't know whether that's my failure or whether, whether I haven't done a good job of training or haven't figured out how to train or whatever. I don't know.

1:19:00 MM: I think it's just an impossible task. It's so difficult. It also feels like something that can just never be mastered. Y'know, like Russ, you've dedicated so many years to this. So it's just greater practice and y'know, the more you do it from either side of the fence, the more you learn what sorts of questions to ask or what to be looking out for or different possibilities, y'know. I think it's the exposure to so many different versions of inner experiences helps.

Russ's story

1:19:34 RTH: I think that's true. I, i, if I have a personality characteristic that led me to do, do whatever it is, I would say it's that I've, I'm not satisfied with things. I'm never hardly ever satisfied. But whether I, whether that is what led me to discover DES or whether that's the result of having done DES for a lot for a long time, I don't, I don't really know.

1:19:56 MM: True. What did lead you on this? How did your mind first go: *Hang on a second!* [JBK laughs] *Everyone's got something different going on in their head!* [Kerry laughs]

1:20:07 RTH: I, I built a beeper back in 1973. So 50, 50 years and five months ago [Mel: Right.] I built a beeper and, uh, and at the time, I, I gave questionnaires, very similar to what EMA and ESM nowadays are doing. I gave a, at that time a pad of paper, a pad of paper with Likert scales on them and uh, uh, and a beeper. And, and then people would fill out these forms and bring 'em back to me, and I would enter them in the computer and do all kinds of fancy analyses on them. And all the while, *for me*, I, I could not get past the fact that I didn't know what the hell a guy meant when he answered a 5 on a Likert scale about how much is this, about the past or how much sex or sexuality is involved with this. And they're giving, they're putting Likert scales on there. And I came to believe that, that if you didn't understand the basic data that was going into your calculation, then you could never understand what was coming out. Garbage in, garbage out. And, and so I *thought*, at the time, well, I got a, I got a, the beeper seems like a good idea, and, uh, but uh, Likert scales weren't, questionnaires weren't. So I started asking, asking people, well what, what did, what did you mean when you answered 4 on the sexuality scale? They, they gave me some kind of a story, which I could tell was being made up, and *they* knew it was being made up. They didn't really know. I didn't know. Nobody knew. They didn't know why they gave a 4. I didn't know why they gave a 4. No, no amount of fancy factor analysis that I would provide to this stuff would, would answer that question.

1:21:59 And so I, uh, started, I s— abandoned, well, I abandoned the work that I had been doing, which, which, uh, and I, and I scoured the world basically for what, what

do you do about inner experience? So I read the introspection literature, and the, the, uh, phenomenology literature and the Buddhism literature and the Jainism literature and, and, uh, and beepers still seemed like a good idea to me. I mean, like the, the Zen people have been doing that for a thousand or 5,000 years or whatever, not as good as I think the beeper. They use a gong and the gong vibrates over the hillside, y'know, and you're supposed to pay attention to what's going on with you when the gong sounds. But the gong has a slow rise time and echoes all over the place. And so it's seemed like the beeper was better than that. And, uh, so I started to answer, trying to answer the, trying to ask the questions carefully. And I think they are the most interesting questions in the world, and most everybody agrees with that. Y'know, *penny, for your thoughts*. Kerry, Kerry's asking her boyfriend for [all laugh] a penny for your thoughts because *she* thinks that's interesting. And everybody does. I think, uh, I just try to do it better.

1:23:26 MM: And I think, um, having a greater awareness of a) you're in— inner, inner experience, but they, but then b) other versions of inner experience, definitely, y'know, increase empathy and, um, impact how we, uh, impact our relationships and how we deal with people. And I think that that's, uh, aside from everything else, and aside from the, the personal satisfaction and, and all the positives that can come from you personally, I think like the greater good thing of like, *Hey, we can all interact with each other a little better when we do this*. I think that is why it's a million-dollar storytelling issue now, because yeah, we could all you, you just makes you interact with people better, I think. [Kerry: Mm.]

1:23:26 Russ comments: Somewhere I have written that it is a virtuous spiral: As you become more attuned to your own inner experience, you become more accepting of the fact that others' experiences are not like yours. And as you become more accepting of experiential differences, you discover how difficult it is to notice your own inner experience. And as you become more attuned to your own experience and its difficulties, you become more genuinely interested in others' experiences. And as you become more genuinely interested in others, you become more accepting of your own. And as you become more accepting of your own, you become more accepting of others'....

But there is no guarantee that that spiral happens—self-interest threatens each step.

Julian comments: Russ, for you, does DES make you more attuned to your inner experience? I'm thinking of your reluctance for many years to being a DES participant yourself (until your students forced it on you). I take it you were more interested in looking outwards rather than inwards? Or feared that sampling yourself could bias you, when sampling with others—for example, favoring certain types of experience.

I have a curious relationship between DES and my own inner experience. Rather than becoming more attuned, I've at times doubted my own self-understanding. Sure, a certain type of experience might pop out as salient. But this could really be a cognitive bias and in the grand-scheme I don't often have this type of experience.

Knowing how hard it can be to figure out someone else's experience (even with the beeps) has made me deeply question how well I really know myself.

This could be a good thing and a first step towards greater attunement. More broadly, I often feel like I gain deep insights doing this research. Often I try to apply these to my daily life—for instance being more attuned to others, not being needlessly contrarian or skeptical for its own sake, not needlessly complicating things to seem smart, being as honest as possible. Sometimes it goes well. Sometimes less so. For example, conversations can be more fun with all the storytelling, theories, baseless speculation, and other bullshit that doesn't cut it in DES.

So now I'm less overeager to form connections. DES is its own thing, with lessons that trickle into other aspects of my life. But being too hasty to draw connections could distort one side or the other.

I'm curious how doing this kind of research for so long has affected your personal life, the kind of person you are, and your understanding of your own experience? Baseless speculation is welcome.

Russ comments: I've been doing DES for 50 years, and there's no way I can disentangle personality, physiology, genetics, and DES practices. I can say I like stories and I appreciate well-crafted metaphors. I also like discipline, whether it is aligning my words with someone else's experience, or aligning my guitar with someone else's score and/or performance. Which of those came first, or alters the other, or whatever, is beyond me.

1:24:18 RTH: It's total, it's totally interesting *for me* because, because it's a, it's a three-dimensional crossword-puzzle challenge every time. So working with *Mel*, it's a matter of how to, how can we, how can we figure out what, how to talk about *Mel's* experience when she's got relatively little stuff to talk about. You gotta figure out how we can, how we can put that into words that rests lightly on *Mel's* experience from *Mel's* point of view. And yet use the language in, in a way that the external world generally uses it, which *Mel* hasn't had to do with her, with her own experience. And that, for me is as organismically involved process as you can get, cuz you gotta (or almost as you can get) because, y'know, *Mel* doesn't know what she's talking about and I don't know what she's talking about. Then we've gotta figure out what she's talking about.

1:25:19 And then with *Kerry*, it's, it's an entirely different deal. She, *Kerry's* pr—, *Kerry's* processes are somewhat different. We gotta figure out, she doesn't know how to describe it and we gotta help her, help her to do it. [*Kerry*: Mm-hmm.] So I think, I think it's totally interesting. And the challenge is not to, not to put some characteristic of *Russ's* interest in between me and *Mel*, or between me and *Kerry*. I, and that's, y'know, that, that *I think* is sort of the heart of the urge to get to the truth or something. Don't try to validate your own theories because that your own theories are, [*JBK*: Mm-hmm.] *are* wrong. Sooner or later you're gonna figure out that they're wrong. And I, and I, and I think, and I think that the, the modern era doesn't understand that. The modern era thinks. Modern psychology, I think, *thinks* that that validating theories is the ultimate path. And I think it's not.

DES publicity

1:26:33 *Kerry*: I think *Mel* needs to make a documentary and then you guys need to go on "Diary of a CEO" podcast and *Jay Shetty* podcast, and then I think this will become a mass thing.

1:26:45 MM: [laughs] Have they ever asked you on, actually, Russ, have you been asked, like, I'm surprised you've never done like a Jay Shetty. Do y'know what that podcast is?

1:26:53 RTH: I don't know that [cut off] I've been on a f—

1:26:54 MM: God I'm about to be your PR advisor.

1:26:56 Kerry: I know! I'm like, in my head I'm like, branding! Marketing! Let's go. [laughs]

1:27:01 MM: But that, that sort of is, that's sort of the idea of how we all got here. I think there's a, a big storytelling piece that needs to *happen* to open up the floodgates to a wider audience. And then there's a, the floodgates are open, but certainly there's a storytelling piece that makes it, um, a little more accessible and understandable to like the whole world. That's, that's the, that's the challenge. And it's a fucking hard challenge. But that's the exciting challenge.

1:27:37 RTH: Yeah, I've been on a number of podcasts. But y'know, they're all sort of esoteric, I guess.

1:27:48 MM: Well, without speaking for you, [Kerry: Were they psychology focused?] I, I think that they're, they're not you, you haven't been on the pop-culture podcast circuit. That's the difference here.

1:27:58 So the podcast that Kerry just mentioned, there were podcasts that would be in the top 20 podcasts in the world, pop-culturally. Um, and I think that that's, without speaking *for* you, Russ, I don't know enough about like what you, what interviews you've done and whatever to like *fully* know. I mean, obviously *I* read your stuff, y'know, in the *New York Times* and things like that. So there's some aspect of it, but I would argue that your stuff has, it still lives heavily in the psychology or academic world where we want to do something that brings it out into the pop culture, broader cultural world. I think that's the interesting challenge to try and get the story out into that wider audience that's not necessarily just the audience of really interested academic psychology people.

1:28:47 Kerry: I think, I think a really important part of the storytelling is actually focusing on the individual stories. Like the, you telling us that Fran example, for instance. Um, because I feel like Mel and I were like, okay, I have ADHD because I have a super active visual auditory brain and Mel *doesn't* have ADHD cuz she doesn't have anything going on, which obviously is like a blanket statement, but that's, I think where people wanna go. They're like, *oh, tell me about myself, make these grand assumptions based off of this information that you have*. But I think to avoid that, focusing on the stories that you've come across in your research where you can pinpoint *this is what happened for this person*. And then people can either relate to that or contrast their experience to that, I think is the way to do it, because we're gonna be, we're gonna wanna tell all these stories based off of like kind of grander assumptions.

1:29:48 But I think the way you bridge the gap between academia, academia and, um, y'know, pop-culture storytelling is actually just focusing on the individual stories where people *can* maybe make their own conclusions from. But *you* would feel confident in that as a researcher because you're not making these big claims, but

there's also a story to be told, like, that Fran story is incredible. Um, and so I think that's how you, I think that's how you ultimately bridge the gap, and whether you do that, starting with Mel's specific, y'know, um, experience and then going from there, um, I think is, uh, I don't know, I'll leave that to Mel, but [JBK laughs], um, I just think that that's a good way of not making giant claims, but also not making it so academic that the grand masses don't wanna pay attention to it.

1:30:44 RTH: I suspect you're right.

1:30:48 JBK: I think DES is wasted on academia. I always get more interest from just, y'know, regular friends or people at parties. And when I talk to academics, I mean, they can be interesting, interested, but it's often like, how can I use it to, to study this theory that I already have? And like DES doesn't work that way. And I think that's part of why I had trouble coming into it was I, y'know, too long in academia surrounded by all these theories and metacognition and all this stuff. And then, yeah, to break away from that and go for like, I mean, that's why I wanna try to make YouTube videos of this stuff and see how that goes. And Mel, you were talking about like editing or making your own podcast. I think there are like so many possibilities.

DES with pop culture celebrities?

1:31:41 Kerry: It'd also be really interesting (now I'm just like thinking of literal advertising campaigns), but it'd also be really interesting to pick people within pop culture and do DES with them and then have them talk about like, okay, this is my inner experience, generally speaking, I have a lot of visuals or I have this or whatever. And then people will be like, what that, what? [laughs]

1:32:05 JBK: Call up Federer.

1:32:04 RTH: So I have thought for a long time that that's, that, that that *is* by far the best way to do it. [Kerry: Mmm.] And, and, and so I have made over the course of my career quite a few offers (not as many as I probably should have) to more-or-less famous people. And I've thought, I thought that it was a six-degree-of-separation kind of a deal is maybe this is like a step here and now you all might know somebody. You're gonna, Mel's gonna be talking to Djokovic or whatever next, next month, and she could tell this story and if he's interested then we can sample with him. And that would be an, that'd be an interesting thing to do or whatever. [Kerry: That'd be really crazy.] But not necessarily him, I'm not trying to plant that seed. But, but you all might have somebody in mind that *wouldn't it be interesting to know what Beyonce's inner experience was* [laughs] or, or, um, and, and, and you, and you might have a conversation with Beyonce in which you could say, "y'know, it might be interesting, you might be interested in this." Sooner or later that'll happen. And that will be interesting.

1:33:16 Kerry: You alls have grand plans for how to market this. [JBK laughs]

1:33:20 MM: Yeah, I know. I, I don't doubt it'll take off. And there's, it's very easy to market it, it's just the challenge. It, it is like, y'know, y'know this Russ and Julian from doing it as

well. Like, it's one thing to try and do DES to understand like, to, to this is like sort of one of the, it's so attractive to me because it's one of the, it's the *hardest* story I've ever come across to attempt to tell, for sure. And that's why it's so interesting and so fascinating because it's, you don't get stories like this, that, that are so fascinating yet so untapped, and so it has so much potential. But it is so challenging to tell this simply because it's not a simple thing. Um, and so that is why the last two years have been so important in understanding DES, understanding variations, understanding all of this, to then as a storyteller, try and work out how is the best way to tell it. And I think, yeah, we're certainly getting really close to that now where I'm at the point where I am working with people that are far better storytellers than I, that I can, y'know, broach this wonderful idea with and get assistance on, okay, how can we like genuinely make this abstract idea into a, into a tangible documentary, tangible pod... like, y'know, tell this story. I think we're very much at that point now. Um,

1:34:56 RTH: So when you talk to those people, you could say Hurlburt would probably be willing to sample with you as well, have a sample, Mel and Russ and that guy, or Mel and Julian and Russ and that guy, or Mel and Kerry and Russ and that guy or somebody or whomever. We could figure that out, maybe. Y'know, I think, I think I, my experience is that there are very few people who don't find it interesting.

1:35:24 MM: Hmm. Yeah, exactly. So it's just about how do you tell it.

1:35:31 RTH: How do you get to 'em?

1:35:32 MM: In a succinct, how,

1:35:33 RTH: How do you, how do you reveal to them that it's interesting? [MM: Correct!] Because, because everybody thinks they know what it would be and they don't, but, and you can't tell 'em.

1:35:44 MM: So it's [inaudible]

1:35:45 RTH: How do you, but you're in a po— you're in a Mel Mel's in a position where she can tell 'em, and so is Kerry and so is Julian, actually. You're in some ways a better position than I am.

1:35:54 MM: Yeah, I think we are! And but, so yeah, the, the exciting challenge is: how can we tell this in a way that allows it to be on the front page of Netflix so that everyone can watch it and realize this is the most fascinating topic in the world. I don't think that's like a unrealistic, lofty dream. I think that's a genuine, that's, that's not a dream, that's a goal, that's an achievable goal, because the subject matter is so, so unique and interesting and untapped. So, y'know, it's two parts of like, we had to wait for me to understand it enough and also my career to continue to progress. And lo and behold, I'm currently doing a documentary for Amazon and about to do another, and these relationships are helpful. [JBK laughs] So yeah, I think that's our challenge and it's an exciting one and I don't think it's an impossible one at all. Yeah. [Kerry: I'm excited.] Yeah,

1:36:50 RTH: Well, it'll be interesting.

About Russ's characteristics

1:36:51 MM: It's just not a fast process. Um, okay, I'm conscious of the time, but I wanna ask one final question and then I'll shut up. It's probably in line with what we just spoke about then, but like, Russ, what are your remaining curiosities with DES? Or like, um, goals or dreams or, y'know? What, what still interests you with it all?

1:37:20 RTH: So I'm, I'm probably more like you than you give me credit for because I, I don't have, I don't really have goals or dreams or whatever. Never have. I've, I've, I have, I have tried to, I have tried to get people into the position where they can reveal themselves to me in ways that I find believable. And I'm still, still interested in it. There's, I, I don't really, I, I, I think there's some, I think there's some value to in that. I don't know whether the value extends beyond *me*, really. Maybe it does. It *probably* does. I think it probably, I *think* it does, but I don't really have, I don't know. I don't know that. I think it's, but I don't, I don't have a grand plan. And so you say for example, *we're gonna have, we're gonna put this on, on the front page of Netflix*. Well, I think that'd be interesting. I, it, it doesn't. I frightens me as much as a, as a, as it as it, uh, interests me. *Frightens* isn't exactly the right word, but it will, I don't, I don't know what that would be like.

1:38:54 JBK: Russ, do you think, like when you phrase things, you, you don't make grand statements and you're very careful, like you say, "I don't know if it's helpful. I *think* it's helpful, but I don't know. I can't *prove* that it's helpful." And I feel like often to popularize something in mass media, like, well, usually people are like, *this will change everything!* y'know, [laughs] and those are kind of opposite things. So I don't, I'm thinking of myself like, I want to do DES and I also want to try to convey it. Like, do you think there's something to fight there, like with these conveying it versus doing it?

1:39:37 RTH: I don't know the answer to that question. [JBK (laughs): Have to figure it out.] So I have, I have said all along in all of our interviews, I think that, I don't know how much of it is peculiarly Russell, Russ-ian, kind of. And, and I think, I think what you just said, Julian, was, is sort of right into money about the way I'm, because I think I am, I, I guess, down to my core pretty much, *I don't know the answer to that*. And so when somebody asks me a question and, and I, I say, "I don't know," it's not like that's a gloss or whatever. That's a, I'm trying to answer the question as genuinely as I can. And that I *take to be* sort of the heart of the matter is trying to answer the questions, is trying to do whatever it is as genuinely as you can. Which is totally short of perfection. I'm, I'm well aware of my own sins and whatever. But the, the, the effort to try to, to try to do as good a job as you can do, [JBK: Hmm.] that's, that's sort of the heart of it. And in *my* case it, it, it's get at somebody else's experience and then you put those two together and you got DES. I'm not sure that answered your question.

1:40:58 MM: But exactly, Julian, and I would say this is where Russ is too close to it and, uh, respects DES, DES too much [JBK: Mm-hmm.] to be able to sell it in the way that is required. Like it's, it's a, it's a, it's a beautiful, noble thing, but as in you need a third

party to convince the world that this is a good thing, because you're, uh, too noble to make the grand statements required, I think.

1:41:28 RTH: So that, so that when I say I'm afraid of what would happen when it's on Netflix, that that's *exactly* the problem. So once on Netflix is going to be *sold* in a way, and the question is whether I would find that repugnant, I guess.

1:41:44 MM: And that's where you have to trust your storytelling partner to not make it repugnant!

1:41:52 RTH: I, I, I absolutely, I absolutely agree with that.

1:41:55 MM: Like really, though, because if it's not told with the nuance and care that you give it, that's when you would react that way. And that's the, that's the challenge that it needs the, the nuance and the intricacy that you afford it and is what makes it so special.

1:42:14 RTH: But, but, but Netflix or, or whatever, has, has vir—, has virtues as the story can be sort of a long story (and maybe it has to be a long story), which is, which is sort of the story that... So the, what I have, what I have spent the last four or five years of my career doing is putting these things out onto the, to the web, which we (Kerry, you and I, we have to have a joint discussion about whether we can do that with *yours*). But that, *that* is the nuance. People can, the, the nuance is there. People who, who want it can find the, can find the nuance, which I have been trying as best I can to describe every step of the way. So I'm not, it's not just that I have put those videos out there of me doing the interviews, but I have put a commentary on that. And that commentary is designed to provide the nuance and, uh, for better or for worse. And that's, I, I guess that's the end of that story. But except Kerry: Is it our, alright with you, or you wanna think about it whether it's alright with you to have these, your interviews be put on the web in more or less the same way as Mel's has been?

1:43:31 Kerry: Yeah, I, I, I don't mind at all [laughs], so go for it.

1:43:35 RTH: Well, sooner or later I will apply myself to doing that.

1:43:40 JBK: I'll do the same.

We should have a green meeting

1:43:44 RTH: And then, and then we also thought about having a green meeting and I think we decided last time we *should* have a green meeting.

1:43:51 MM: Yeah. Can we do a double green meeting comparing Mel and I? Is that not allowed?

1:43:58 RTH: The green meetings generally take three or four hours. [Kerry: Okay.]

1:44:01 MM: What?!? How?!? [all laugh] How?!? I'm serious.

1:44:09 RTH: The green meetings generally last over several days.

- 1:44:13 MM: Okay. I'm serious, how! What do you talk about for that long [laughs]? This is the storytelling problem. We have [laughs],
- 1:44:24 RTH: So we, we, we should, we should do it and, and, and uh, and *see*. Maybe, maybe we can do it fast and it's possible that Kerry's green meetings would be fairly quick, quick. I think. Well, maybe not. So, so the, the, what takes a, what takes a long time is because (in the world according to Hurlburt), everything is uh, try to get it genuinely right. So I want, I want Kerry to understand what I understand and I want Julian to understand what I understand and I want to understand what Julian understands, and whatever. And that takes, that takes time. So it's not just, it's not just about, sorry,
- 1:45:02 MM: Do you go through like every beep?
- 1:45:04 RTH: Every beep. [MM: Wow!] And we say, this is somebody says, this is what I understood about this beep. And then (well, I think we probably ought to just *do* it and you get a chance to see), but, but we try to characterize the beep in a few pithy words, six or eight words maybe, characterize this beep. But then, but then we have to make sure that those words fit happily on everybody's tongue. And that just takes time.
- 1:45:34 MM: Wow. Why did we never do this with me? I didn't even know this existed! We got distracted by Kerry! [Kerry laughs]
- 1:45:45 RTH: So the, the, the *Mel* interviews from my point of view are, were, are, are as much *Julian* interviews as they are *Mel* interviews.
- 1:45:56 MM: Mm mm.
- 1:45:57 JBK: It's me messing up, sorry Mel! [laughs]
- 1:45:59 RTH: There's as much the transformation of Julian [Mel: Mm-hmm.] as the, as Mel coming to find out about her inner experience. And I'm *guessing* that's, that confused me when it came time to do a green meeting. So I was thinking more about Julian than I was about Mel. Or at least as much about Julian.
- 1:46:19 MM: Unbelievable, Julian. [laughs] [Julian: Yeah. Mucking around.] Anyway, all of that to say a green meeting, I mean, if it's too late to do me, that doesn't matter. But at the very least I'd like to sit in on a Kerry green. Like, I need to experience one of these for sure.
- 1:46:34 RTH: So as a, as a general rule, the green meeting, the, I, I always, I always think I want to do the most recent thing first. [Mel: Yeah.] So if we're gonna do two green meetings, I would rather do Kerry first and then Mel, rather than the other way around, because the fidelity is always, is always in the *near term*. So I, I'm always in favor of doing the most frequent. [RTH misspeaks here; he means the most *recent*.] So we, we set a time aside on this January 3rd, on Friday at 4:00 or whatever. Do we wanna do at least start a green meeting for Kerry on that day?