

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY
Do I Really Have Internal Monologue?
Lena Interview 10:
DES Sampling Day 8

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the April 15 interview with Lena that is available on YouTube at youtu.be/hg1F6tuF5OM. In green are comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

AK = Alek Krumm

Lena = Lena

0:00 RTH: So this is going to be day 8, I think. Sampling day 8, interview, what we've been calling, "interview, interview 10, sampling day 8," something like that. [inaudible] Anything we should be talking about before we launch into the samples?

0:17 Lena: Not that I can say.

0:21 RTH: Okay, then I'm ready.

0:25 AK: Me too.

SAMPLE 8.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

0:26 Lena: Alright, so beep one. Um, I was, um, reading, and, um, I read this, uh, sentence "graduate students interested in neuroscience." And, um, I was visualizing, um, UNLV as I was reading that. And, um, just a general view of the entrance into the, um, library. Just seeing the, um, outside of that and the trees. As I was reading, I was visualizing what I was reading by seeing UNLV.

1:15 AK: Mm hm.

1:17 RTH: Okay. And that's, that's, and, and, uh, about the reading. Are you, are you reading with comprehension? Are you, did the words matter to you? How does that, how does that go?

1:17 Russ comments: That was a pretty badly crafted question. RTH wanted to know about the experience of the reading, if any. We will get to that eventually.

1:31 Lena: Um, yeah, I'm, I wasn't reading to learn. I was just reading to, um, um, just to see possibilities, um, about, at UNLV, uh, for graduate programs. And in doing that I, um, was visualizing, um, I was reading about graduate programs for who are interested in

neuroscience and visualizing, um, at that time, the outside scene of UNLV. [RTH: Okay.] And specifically the trees and seeing the lighting and the trees as I would see it if I was there.

2:13 RTH: And, and in the reading, in the experience of reading, do you just get the meaning or are you *speaking* the words or,

2:21 Lena: Oh, I just get the meaning. Yeah.

2:23 RTH: The meaning comes in with, with no inner speaking of the words?

2:27 Lena: Uh, *with* an inner speaking yes, sorry. Yes. With an inner speaking, um, and internal in my mind, in my voice, in my mind.

2:35 RTH: Okay. [Lena: Yes.] Alright. Then I would say that this is similar to other samples that we've, we've had. [Lena: Yes.] And we've run out of time before we've gotten to the later samples. So I would, I would say, let's go forwards and get to sample number 2, unless anybody has got anything more to say about this one.

2:52 Lena: [to Alek] What do you think?

2:55 AK: I think that sounds great. Yeah.

SAMPLE 8.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

2:56 Lena: Yep. This was a pretty straightforward brief little one. Okay. [RTH: Okay.] Alright. So number 2. Um, I was driving, um, listening to, um, Scottish bagpipes and I was visualizing the Scottish highlands and a traditional Scottish soldier. Wondering about what life was like for the people who lived in those olden clan days.

3:29 AK: Okay. [Lena: Yes.] So let me see if I got all that. I'm listening to this um music. (This is for real, like this is coming out of my car speaker? is that... [Lena: Correct. Yeah.] Okay.) And then I'm, I'm visualizing Scottish Highlands with this. And there's a soldier?

3:50 Lena: Um, yes, I am, um, visualizing the, the scenery of the Scottish highlands and in that scenery there is a picture of a Scottish soldier wearing like the olden-style kilt in warrior-type material. [laughs] Yeah.

4:08 AK: Okay. *And* at the same time I'm wondering about what life was like back then?

4:14 Lena: Yes, yes. Specifically wondering about what it was like living in those Celtic days. Celtic tribes. [Alek: Um hmm.] Yeah.

4:27 AK: And how exactly do you experience the wondering?

4:32 Lena: Um, [sighs] it's a sense. It's a sense of, um, it's like as a sensing (I don't know how to describe it). It's kind of what I've been trying to describe the last few times. It's a sensation, not particularly physical, but, but a sense of sensation that comes over me

that I'm feel... It's a feeling, I would say. Moreso a feeling, a sensing feeling. [Alek: Um hmm.] If that makes sense. [laughs] I don't know how to describe this one.

4:32

Russ comments: When DES participants say they were "wondering" and then, with evident uncertainty, talk about "sensing" or "feeling," that is often a sign that the experience is of a cognitive thinking that is experienced directly before the footlights of consciousness, but is experienced without words, visual images, or other experienced symbols. DES calls this phenomenon *unsymbolized thinking*. The struggle arises because DES participants often believe, deep down and without a hint of doubt, that *experiencing thinking without words is impossible*. DES calls that kind of deep-down, taken-for-granted knowing a *presupposition*. As they become more skilled in the experience-describing process, many DES participants are confronted with having to describe something that they themselves observe in themselves but that they *know deep down cannot possibly exist*. It is indeed distressing to observe something in yourself that is in direct opposition to your own unquestioned beliefs.

Lena here *looks like* a textbook example of a DES participant struggling to describe unsymbolized thinking. Here's what Hurlburt and Akhter (2008) said about the appearance of unsymbolized thinking in a typical participant they called "Evelyn":

Evelyn appears helpless, powerless in the face of her own observation of her experience. Her expression conveys something like the following: I know this sounds weird, and I don't think it's really possible, but you asked me to tell you exactly what is in my experience and this is it. Sorry it doesn't conform to your expectations, but this is what I was thinking. (p. 1366)

Note that Lena appears confident in her 4:14 turn when she first describes her wondering. But when Alek asks about how that was experienced, she appears (at 4:32) to lose her confidence: she sighs, hems and haws, can't find words, and so on.

This example opens a window into the DES art. First, the skilled DES investigator would notice that Lena is struggling to describe *something*. Second, the investigator would recognize that that struggle looks very much like the prototypical emergence-of-unsymbolized-thinking struggle. Third, the investigator would happily recognize that the fact that Lena *looks like* someone who is struggling to describe unsymbolized thinking does *not* imply that Lena *is indeed* struggling to describe unsymbolized thinking—her evident struggle may have an entirely different origin. Fourth, the investigator would know that DES is *not an inferential process*—we should not *infer* that Lena was experiencing unsymbolized thinking. We will have to clarify this phenomenon in the upcoming interview about the present or later samples. Fifth, the investigator would know that presuppositions are mini (or maxi) delusions. If Lena does have a presupposition/delusion that all thinking must be in words, it will *not be possible* for her to give a straightforward description of her own unworded thinking (that's the nature of delusion). As a result of all that, the investigator has to bracket any inferential urge in the direction of unsymbolized thinking while at the same time supporting Lena in her struggle, helping her to describe her experience, whatever it is, that is difficult or impossible to describe.

Keeping all those conflicting things understood, accepted, and simultaneously bracketed requires substantial skill. But it is only in so doing that one can come to accept the existence of the unsymbolized thinking experience.

- 5:09 AK: Well, it sounds like you're working hard at it and I think maybe we're closer. So, [Lena: Yeah.] So is there a difference between sense and feeling for you? Or are you using those synonymously?
- 5:09 Russ comments: As an instantiation of the 4:32 comment, note that Alek is supportive of Lena ("you're working hard at it") and wades gently into the discussion of the phenomenon (that is, Alek does *not* say *Aha! You're having a thought without words!*).
- 5:24 Lena: I'm using them synonymously. Um, but to explain it better, um, you know, I don't, I don't want to get too much into theories, but I don't know if this will help, but in the same way that you would sense when something touches your skin, um, like you know, it's there and so then you realize you're feeling something. It's almost the same way, but obviously nothing's touching my skin. It's, it's a sense, it's a feeling that's coming to me, that I'm sensing in a way. And I'm just kind of opening up to that sense and deeping, like diving deeper into whatever that sensing is. And, and then of course the visualizations are on top of that as well. And specific thoughts, if there is any.
- 6:17 RTH: So I'm, I'm, I'm worried that we've maybe got ourselves confused about the words, and I want to make sure that I understand it. [Lena: Okay.] So is this, is this primarily a *wondering* thing? I'm wondering what it was, what it was like? Or is this pri.... Which would make it sort of in the *cognitive* realm? [Lena: Um hm.] Or is this primarily a, *I'm imagining myself there* and so I sort of *sensed* the Celtic surroundings around me.
- 6:46 Lena: Um, so for this particular beep it was more of a *wondering*. And it was, and the wondering has a *sense* of it. So in visualizing what my idea of a Scottish soldier would, is, is, um, I'm seeing his, um, traditional clothing and traditional way of looking, whatever that is at the time that I'm visualizing it from. [RTH: Okay.] Um, so it's, it's a wondering, but the wondering feels like a, um, like a sensing almost, I dunno how, how else to describe that word [inaudible] a little bit.
- 7:23 RTH: So the, the hard part about sensing and... [corrects himself] *sensing*, and the hard part about these kinds of experiences in general, is that "sensing" sometimes has a *physical* kind of thing to it [rubs his fingertips together]. [Lena: Right.] And sensing some, and sensing is sometimes meant as, *well, I'm thinking about this, I'm wondering about this*, but, but there's no words involved and there's no... Somehow I'm getting this, this cognitive wondering without, without it being conveyed in any directly symbolic form, or something like that.
- 7:58 Lena: Correct. Yes. That's what it, what it is.
- 8:01 RTH: That's what you meant. That's what you mean by sensing?
- 8:02 Lena: Yes. That's what I mean by "sensing."
- 8:03 RTH: So sensing means un, non-symbolized thinking.
- 8:10 Lena: [nods affirmatively] More or less? Yes, yes.

8:10 Russ comments: We have arrived at a tentative understanding of Lena's wondering as being a cognitive experience. The skilled interviewer will bracket even that, accepting Lena's "more or less" as perhaps an indication that we are not entirely on the right track.

It is always worth questioning whether the DES interviewers may have unfairly led Lena into this cognitive characterization. Here is a recap of how the investigators treated wondering: AK (05:09) asked whether sensing and feeling were different; RTH (06:17) asked whether the wondering was cognitive or an imagined-being there; RTH (07:23) asked whether sensing was physical or cognitive. That seems to us a pretty even-handed way of embodying all the factors described in the comment at 4:32. Out of that comes Lena's (7:58) conclusion that it was cognitive. Did we lead her to that? You, of course, may judge for yourself.

8:17 RTH: Okay. [long pause] And the..

8:23 AK: [simultaneously] And is there... Sorry, go ahead.

8:25 RTH: Go ahead.

8:25 AK: Well, I was gonna move on to the seeing, so if you have another question about that wondering...

8:30 RTH: Well, I, I, I w, wanted to make sure that the, the wondering was related to the seeing but separate from it. So I experienced myself as *seeing*, innerly seeing this Celtic soldier. And at the same time I am somehow cognitively [shrugs helplessly] pondering, kind of, wondering, whatever, about what it was like back then.

8:30 Russ comments: Note that by his helpless gesture RTH re-opens the issue of the nature of the wondering. That is, he indicates that he does not consider the previous cognitive characterization to be a final answer. That is part of the iterative art: it indicates, going forward, that how best to characterize this kind of experience is still a work in progress.

8:57 Lena: Correct. Yes. What it was like for those, um, the, the olden day clans. Like what it was like for those specific clans.

9:07 RTH: Okay. Then I'm ready for the picture.

9:09 AK: Okay. Um, what exactly do you see?

9:13 Lena: Um, uh, the background of the picture is your overall, you know, Scottish highland scene. I'm not sure if you're familiar with that, what that looks like, but that's the background. And you know, I could see the grass, they can see the hills and the mountains and um, you know, the tall, the tall grass, not like short little grass, like the tall grass. And the sky kind of cloudy gray. And, um, a Scottish, uh soldier who is wearing a typical kilt tartan and um, his, you know, shirt and his, the belt and the

whole thing. The, the sword and just kind of see him triumphantly standing on the highland hills.

- 10:04 AK: Okay. [Lena: Um hm.] Is there a focus in this seeing?
- 10:09 Lena: Um, him mostly, but he's not, I don't necessarily see face facial features. Um, but he seems to be the, the main focus.
- 10:22 AK: And by "I don't really see facial features," like they're just kind of indeterminate? Like it's definitely a man. It's definitely a face. I just don't, you know, I couldn't tell you exactly what his nose look like, that...
- 10:33 Lena: Yeah. Mm hm.
- 10:36 AK: Okay. And do you see this clearly?
- 10:39 Lena: Yeah, pretty clearly, yes. I see color. Um, I see the definition of, of his clothes, um, of the grass and the, the nature aspects. Uh, the only thing that's like we said indeterminate is the face, the features of the face.
- 10:56 AK: Okay. And are you particularly into any of the visual characteristics? Like am I into the kilt for some reason (for its color or its definition or whatever)? Or I'm just seeing this soldier and he happens to be wearing a kilt and [pause] [inaudible].
- 11:17 Lena: Um, yeah, the kilt is important, because it's part of like my wondering of the Celtic, um, ancient ways of being the clan way of being. Um, so I'm seeing him wearing the kilt as a very important feature of the visualization as it pertains to that whole ancient Celtic way of dressing.
- 11:42 AK: Okay. So I guess I want to separate like what is important as far as *meaning* and what is important as far as your *experience* is concerned. So I'm, by what you just said, I'm gathering like the kilt is important because it signifies this is traditional garb or whatever. [Lena: Um hm.] And the, my question was more like, um, is there any part of this that is really *grabbing* your experience? Like, um, I'm *really* into the *pattern* on the kilt just for the *pattern*, not even about it's *kilt-ness*. This, I'm just into the pattern. Is there anything like that?
- 12:17 Lena: Mmm,
- 12:18 AK: Certainly doesn't have to be, just...
- 12:21 Lena: I would say it's an overall, the whole overall scene is, is I'm pretty into. There's not one particular thing that is, I'm paying most attention to. It's, it's the whole scene altogether.
- 12:33 AK: Gotcha. Okay. And at the same time you're hearing the music, is that still in, is the music still in your experience at this moment?

- 12:40 Lena: Yes. Um hm.
- 12:44 AK: Then I think I'm good.
- 12:47 RTH: We have said that you're driving. And [Lena: Yes.] apparently there's little or not much experience of driving. Is that true? [Lena: Yeah...] Obviously you're driving skillfully, you're not running in people or whatever. But that, that doesn't necessarily mean that it's in your experience, the...
- 13:05 Lena: Correct. Yes. The driving is, um, kind of what we've said before in previous beeps that, um, I'm skillfully doing it, but it's not necessarily something I'm *experiencing* full-on.
- 13:16 RTH: So, yeah. So is that, to me, do I understand as far as my direct, before-the-footlights-of-consciousness experience is concerned, the driving is *not* there. Obviously I'm doing it skillfully and my eyes are processing it and my hands are doing it and whatever, but that's not part of my direct experience.
- 13:34 Lena: Correct.
- 13:34 RTH: Okay. Then I'm good. Number 3.

SAMPLE 8.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 13:41 Lena: Okay! Um. So in number 3, I'm also, um, listening to the Scottish bagpipes and uh, visualizing the Celtic symbols. And in *this* visualization, I was seeing myself, putting myself into the time frame of what I'm visualizing. Um, and at the same time as, as doing that, I was looking at a cover of a soundtrack, um, and um, it was of a woman stuck between a Redcoat and a Scottish soldier. And, um, I was seeing the Celtic symbols around. So I was visually looking at that. Um, and at the same time concentrating on putting myself into that timeframe.
- 14:35 RTH: So I'm not sure that I understood that.
- 14:36 Lena: Sorry. [inaudible].
- 14:36 RTH: So. So with your, with your real eyes, I'm seeing the album cover. [Lena: Cover. Yes.] Okay. And the album cover has a Redcoat and a woman with Celtic symbols around them. Is that right?
- 14:56 Lena: Yes. Yes.
- 14:58 RTH: And then in your *imaginary*—that's a *real* seeing out of your real life [Lena: Yes.] And in the *imaginary* seeing, you're seeing a scene that involves yourself. [Lena: Um hm.] And what do you, what exactly do you see in that imaginary scene?
- 15:16 Lena: Um, putting myself into, um, uh, the time frame that I'm visualizing in Scotland, and seeing myself as a person of that time.

15:31 RTH: So do you see *yourself*? Or just through your own eyes?

15:35 Lena: I see myself, yes, there. [RTH: So from a...] And I'm seeing myself. Yeah. I'm not necessarily in my own eyes looking out into the world. I'm me looking at myself in the scene.

15:47 RTH: And do you see yourself from the front or from the side or from overhead or ...

15:51 Lena: Um, kind of, uh, up to the side.

15:57 RTH: Okay. And the "kind of" in that "kind of open up from the side," does that mean I'm not.,, I'm having a hard time describing exactly what the perspective is, but I see myself clearly?

16:08 Lena: Yes. It's not super high up where I'm looking down at myself. It's kind of just more to the side, kind of this angle here (if you can see me like) [demonstrates perspective]. [RTH: Okay.] But not too too far up to where I'm not seeing myself as much [inaudible]

16:23 RTH: And do you, and do you see... How much of yourself do you see? Do you see just your face? Or your whole body? Or...?

16:31 Lena: Um, I see my face. And also I would see my body. But the way that I'm seeing it is almost... The way that I wrote it down was that I'm seeing it as kind of two things happening. Not necessarily just one scene of myself and my face and my body, but I'm seeing my face in the moment. And then, uh, another part of the moment as my whole, my whole body wearing specifically the, um, same style that the Scottish people would wear back then.

17:09 RTH: And when you say another part of the moment, do you mean uh, uh, sequence in time? Or that these are simultaneously collage-like presented in some way.

17:21 Lena: Simultaneously collage-like, yeah.

17:24 RTH: So your, so your *imaginary* seeing doesn't have to follow the rules of a real seeing. So you can see two things in your imagination at that, at a time. That's...

17:32 Lena: Right. Right.

17:34 RTH: And so, and so do I understand that what you're saying is that I both see my face in one manner of seeing and in another manner of seeing I see my body.

17:45 Lena: Yes.

17:46 RTH: And are they from the same perspective? I see my face and then see my body from the same angle but more of me?

17:54 Lena: Different perspectives [RTH: Different per...] Different perspectives. Yeah.

- 17:58 RTH: And so the body part. Do I see that straight on or from...
- 18:02 Lena: Straight on. I see the body part more straight on.
- 18:04 RTH: Okay. And in that, and, and so in both of those we've described the seeing of *Lena*: Lena's face or Lena's body. [Lena: Um hm.] And do I see anything other than that? Or is it just, just Lena that I understand is in Celtic time.
- 18:20 Lena: I see, um, the gray sky, um, the same gray sky that I was visualizing with the Scottish soldier, and the green hills and mountains.
- 18:32 RTH: And does that seem part of both of the scenes or one or just one of them?
- 18:37 Lena: Both the, the, the gray sky and the green hills are part of both of the perspectives I was having.
- 18:43 RTH: Okay. So this is in some way, um, I'm seeing the same kind of Celtic landscape, but *before* I was seeing a soldier in it and *now* I'm seeing myself in it? [Lena: Um hm.] And the soldier guy was wearing the kilts and the belts and swords and stuff. [Lena: Yes.] W what are you, what are you wearing?
- 19:07 Lena: Uh, I'm wearing the, I, I don't know what you would call it, but it's a long dress from the period, that time period of probably the 1700s. And um, and the women then, wore the, their Scottish tartans over their shoulders. So I'm seeing that over my shoulder with the belt that is typical for that sort of outfit. And um...
- 19:36 RTH: So let, let, let, let, let, let's have one little meta-conversation here. [Lena: Sure.] So what's typical, what's typical at that time is *not* what I'm in, what *I'm* interested in. What I'm interested in is your experience then. So I would, if, if what you're saying is I see myself with a dress and a carton, uh, a tartan shawl over my shoulder. [Lena: Yes.] And I see myself wearing a belt. [Lena: Yes.] That's the, that's the part that I'm, I'm interested in. We can have a side conversation ("well, that's what I think is, is, is typical of the period"). But that's the kind of thing that I would like us to keep *separate*, as sort of the, the understanding, un, *unless* there's, there's something about that period. So if I'm just imagining myself dressed in that period and I'm wearing a shawl or whatever this thing would be across my shoulder, if that's what I see, then that's what I know what I want to know about. But if for some reason I'm thinking about it specifically, *well, I've got to put a shawl over my shoulder because that's what people did*. If I'm having that kind of a thought process, then I want, I want to be talking about that.
- 19:36 Russ comments: This is one more instance of the iterative training in cleaving to experience: in describing before-the-footlights-of-consciousness experience and avoiding all else. Today's interview has been much more successful in cleaving to experience, but (like all skill acquisitions) it needs frequent reminder and practice.
- 20:40 Lena: Yes. Um, I, I hear what you're saying. So what I was visualizing wearing was exactly what I was wearing in visualization, the belt, the tartan shawl thing, and the dress.

20:57 RTH: Great. Okay. And out of, so I've, I've got, we've decided that there are actually sort of three seeings going on. There's two imaginary seeings and one real seeing. Does it make sense to ask about whether one or more of those is more prominent than the other?

21:21 Lena: Mm, the most prominent would be, um, me visualizing myself there.

21:28 RTH: So the two, those two scenes together are more prominent than the real seeing of the, of the cover.

21:36 Lena: Right, right, yeah.

21:37 RTH: By more prominent, do we mean 60-40, or 90-10, or [shrugs]?

21:41 Lena: Probably 90-10.

21:43 RTH: So a *lot* more prominent. [Lena: Yeah. Yeah.] Okay.

21:47 AK: Can I ask a couple more questions about the two imaginary inner seeings? [Lena: Um hm.] So I'm understanding that one is of Lena's face and one is of Lena's body. [Lena: Um hm.] Are they like overlaid on each other such that it looks like a real person, but she's kinda turned funky [laughs] like in an impossible way? Or it's just somehow I see both of them and... Because I guess, and maybe I missed something here, but I guess I'm picturing kind of like a head-less body [Lena and Alek laugh] and a body-less head and [Lena: Yeah.], but you don't seem, you're not telling us why he's a head-less body, which I think you would do if it, if the experience felt like that. [they smile]

22:26 Lena: It wasn't distorted. I know the way that it sounded, the way I described it came off like I, it may be distorted. But it's, I'm seeing two perspectives of myself [Alek: Um hm.] at the same time, if, if that's, if one can do that.

22:41 AK: So it's like the same Lena. [inaudible] [Lena: Yes.]. This is just one Lena, but I'm just seeing her in two ways.

22:46 Lena: In two different ways. Yeah. [Alek: Okay. I got it.] In two different angles. It's like when you're, I've just, just for reference, I don't know if this is helpful, but when looking or watching a movie, there's many different angles, you know? [Alek gestures different perspectives; inaudible] So that's kind of what I'm doing. Yeah. It kind of seems like it's stacked on each other a little bit, but um, when you break it down a little bit, that's kinda what that's happening.

23:09 AK: Gotcha. Okay. Thanks. [Lena: Um hm.] Okay.

23:14 RTH: And then I'm, the Scottish bagpipes are playing [Lena: Yes.] and am I listening to that? Or have I sort of left that behind in favor of this inner seeing?

- 23:24 Lena: The music is very important to the inner seeing. Um, that's kind of what the driving force of the fantasy is. So I'm very involved with the bagpipes, the Scottish bagpipes.
- 23:37 RTH: And is Scottish Bagpipes a group? Or is there, or are you just saying, I'm listening to bagpipes?
- 23:45 Lena: Um, yeah, just, it's not the name of the group, Scottish Bagpipes or anything. But it's just this instrument.
- 23:55 RTH: I'm listening to bagpipe music of the Scottish variety.
- 23:55 Lena: The instrument, yeah, yeah.
- 23:58 RTH: Then I'm good.
- 23:58 AK: Me too.
- 24:03 RTH: And you're doing great. [Alek: Yeah.].

SAMPLE 8.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 24:05 Lena: Alright. Okay. Um, so, um, number 4 is, um, I was, uh, texting my neighbor and um, well she texted me. And uh, we were talking about, or she was letting me know that she was disappointed with something, um... That she was feeling disappointed that as a parent, um, she's doing all the disciplining. And so I was visualizing her as I'm reading this upset obviously, and um, and hearing her vent. Just letting her vent and um, at the same time relating to what she's saying.
- 24:55 AK: And what of all that is, is caught in your experience by the beep?
- 25:03 Lena: The beep caught where I was visualizing her upset and mad. So I have already read the text and I am visualizing as I'm re... Like after reading I'm seeing her as upset.
- 25:22 AK: Okay. [Lena: Yes.] And does that mean, so I have already read the text. [Lena: Um hm.] Is the text in any way still present to me? [Lena: Yes. Yes.] And beyond just like the text is the, the source of the image? [Lena: Yes.] Okay. But it's not like I'm *saying* it to myself...?
- 25:47 Lena: As in what do you mean, saying it to myself? The...
- 25:50 AK: Like the text message...
- 25:51 Lena: Like reading it. So, Oh yes. No. No, I'm not saying it to myself. I've already read it prior to the beep. Um, and in that moment I was just visualizing her upset and hearing her vent and that like, not *hearing* her, but in my mind I'm *hearing* her as, as if I would, if I was there, like visualizing her upset now and I'm hearing what she has to say about what she's feeling and relating to it at the same time.

- 26:18 AK: Okay. So the, [Lena: Yeah.] I wanted to ask about that. So the relating is, somehow, that is in my direct experience. [Lena: Yes. Yes.] So I see my neighbor from what perspective?
- 26:32 Lena: Uh, head on, straight forward, like straight forward.
- 26:36 AK: Okay. And like her whole body, like head to toe or just...
- 26:40 Lena: Mainly her face.
- 26:44 AK: Mainly her face. [Lena: Um hm.] And she's upset. [Lena: Yeah.] And do I, like, is she crying? Or do I just *know* she's upset or...?
- 26:55 Lena: Um, I could almost hear her voice. As in like I could, I'm remembering the sound of her voice. I could *hear* it and um visualize her upset just by hearing the sound of her voice being upset. [Alek: Um hm.] Yeah, if that makes sense.
- 26:55 Russ comments: Notice that about the voice, Lena says three contradictory things in her 26:55 turn: "almost hear," "remembering the sound," and "I hear it." The art of DES is *not* to infer which of those is correct. Instead, the art is to notice the ambiguity and try to reduce it by follow-up questions. And if that turns out to be impossible, then the attempt will accumulate as part of the iterative training: maybe we will encounter a similar sample on subsequent days, and *then* we will be better able to be less ambiguous.
- 27:12 AK: Yes. And so is that... So I heard that a couple of ways, like I hear it or I remember almost what she sounds like. So is that to say I am *hearing* it? Or I'm *kind of* hearing it, which means I don't know like it's quiet or it's, it's, it's sound but it's not really words? Or I just *recall* in some cognitive-y kind of way what she sounds like, but I *don't* actually hear it? Or...?
- 27:40 Lena: I *know* I am hearing her voice as it sounds. In my mind. Um, but I don't know that I am specifically recalling it in the way that you described, um, or how I'm re, like, even remembering what her voice even sounds like. 'Cause I don't know, I don't know the process of how I'm doing that. I just, I am hearing her voice in my mind as upset, and visualizing that. And I *can* in the visualization *hear* the sound of her voice. If that makes sense.
- 28:21 AK: Okay, good. So I'm... Yes that's great 'cause I'm not really interested in the memory process involved in this. [Lena: Right. Right.] Obviously there is some, your memory is somehow [Lena: There.] create this voice or whatever, but we don't know anything about that. [Lena: Yeah.] But as I'm understanding you, there is a voice in the inner seeing. Like the, my neighbor is makin' sounds. Is that right? [Lena: Yes.] And is she saying something? Like, is this coherent? Or...?
- 28:51 Lena: Um, it's not, um, anything specific. It's just I'm, I'm understanding her as upset, and I'm hearing it, the, the upset in her voice.

29:09 AK: Um hm. But, but I'm gathering these aren't nec..., These aren't really like words, but there's somehow...

29:16 Lena: Right. I'm understanding the...

29:16 AK: ...they're vocalizations that I understand as upset.

29:18 Lena: Yes. Yeah. In the tone of her voice.

29:23 RTH: So let me see whether I'm, whether I'm tracking this. So we have talked in the past, I guess maybe in the second beep, or the second beep today about the seeing the guy, but his face was not differentiated. Is this sort of in a similar deal here? I'm hearing her voice, but the words that she's saying are not differentiated?

29:46 Lena: Yeah, I would, I, I could say that you could relate it to that. Um, there's not any one specific word I'm hearing. I'm just understanding that in, I'm in, I'm I guess cognitively aware of the sound of her voice and the tone of it.

30:04 RTH: So I want to make sure I understand that. [Lena: Okay.] So does this mean that at this moment of the beep *I hear her voice*. [Lena: Um hm.] And now I'm going to tell you guys about it, and her voice is, is upset/mad? [Lena: Um hm.] *Or* is it, at the moment of the beep I am cognitively thinking about, *well she's mad*. So the question is, is, is this a *hearing* experience, an imaginary hearing? I hear my neighbor's mad voice? Or is this a *Lena-analytical* experience? I'm understanding/recognizing/processing her voice? And obviously you're processing it. I mean, there's no question about that. The question is what's in your *experience*?

30:57 Lena: Um hm. Um, I don't know that if I am, if I can say it's one or the other.

31:06 RTH: Uh, so the, the ba, the basic question is: Is this, at the moment of the beep, is this primarily a hearing experience? And by primarily, I mean we've just established that it's a *seeing* experience. I'm not questioning that. [Lena: Um hm.] But is, does this seeing include the experience of hearing?

31:24 Lena: Yes. [definitively] Yes. The see, the seeing includes the experience of hearing. Yes. [RTH: Okay.] Yes.

31:32 AK: Great. And, um, do you see your neighbor's face clearly? Like with detail? Like her, you see eyes and nose and whatever?

31:42 Lena: Yeah. [Alek: Okay.] [pause] [all three speak at once.]

31:47 AK: Go ahead.

31:47 RTH: Then there's the relating portion. [to Alek] Is that where you're going?

31:50 AK: Yep. Tell me, tell me about the relating. How does that, how's that present to you?

- 31:58 Lena: Um, a sense of understanding and wanting to allow her or let her vent as I understand exactly what she's feeling. And in that understanding, I'm, it... [pause] The understanding comes to me as like a, another sensing/feeling, and I allow myself to, um, give her space to vent [Alek: Okay.] in that moment that I was texting her.
- 32:38 AK: Okay. Okay. So me, let's refine sensing/feeling for this beep. [Lena: Okay.] So for the second one, or something, we were talking about sensing, [Lena: Um hm.] and, and what we decided, though, was really, that was a wondering, which was kind of a cognitive thing. I was wondering about what life was like back then. [Lena: Yes.] Is, is this like that? Or how is this different than that? Um, certainly I understand the content is different, right? But...
- 33:09 Lena: Um hm. For this one, um, yeah, I think it's, I want to say it's the same, the same sensing. Um, but more so relating to when I was, um, relating to the characters in the book that I was reading last week, um, where I was sensing/feeling like having that empathetic kind of, um, sensing understanding of what the character, the man was feeling and the girl in that one beep. I'm in the same way doing that with her. Um, but also in a way where I'm, I am relating to it, I'm relating to her frus, frustration. [Alek: Okay.] And sensing, feeling her from an empathetic point of view and then, um, and then relating to it.
- 34:03 AK: Okay. And w, like does it make sense to say this is like this is an *emotional* experience? Or no, this is more like a cognitive *think-y* experience?
- 34:13 Lena: Oh, I want to stay that they're both present, happening. Both the cognitive and emotional aspects are occurring together.
- 34:23 AK: Um hm. And are they separable? Like the cognitive part is, *I understand* and the emotional part is *I empathize*? Or they're not really separable; it's just one kind of *thing* that involves, I guess, both cognitive stuff and emotional stuff.
- 34:40 Lena: I don't... I see them as one thing, the cognitive and emotional. I see it as happening together. [Alek: Um hm.]
- 34:50 RTH: So I'm both understanding and feeling it at the same time. [Lena: Yes.] (Which might be sort of the definition of empathetic, actually.) [Alek: Mm hm.] [They laugh]
- 35:04 AK: Then I think I'm good. [RTH: Me, too.]

SAMPLE 8.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 35:12 Lena: Perfect. We're really movin' along. [Alek: We are!] Um, so the, um, fifth beep, I, um, I was writing down notes for my, um, for class, and I stopped at the word, uh, "tonotopically." (I don't know if I'm saying that right, tonotopically [laughs]). And um, um, I'm envisioning as I'm writing this down, um, an ear that I drew for a previous class. And I'm trying to remember all the different parts of the ear.

- 35:50 RTH: So I'm, I am seeing a drawing, not seeing an ear, but seeing my own drawing of an ear. [Lena: Um hm. Yes.] And, and do I, is, is my experience of seeing it accurately? This is what I actually drew?
- 36:09 Lena: Um, I'm not recalling it, um, accurate, like, uh, the, the exact way I drew it. What I'm mostly recalling is the colors I used to draw it. [RTH: Um hm.] Yes.
- 36:21 RTH: And so does, is that to say at the moment of the beep I am interested in the colors that I'm, that I'm imagining? And those colors happen to be on an ear that I have previously drawn?
- 36:35 Lena: I'm interested in remembering what parts of the ear that I was drawing, but I'm only seeing the colors I used to draw, if that makes sense. Like I'm not able to fully recall what I drew, or what the part of the ears that I'm trying to remember. It was more so the remembering of the colors I used to draw it. Not so much of the actual, um, parts of the ears that I needed to learn at the time.
- 37:10 RTH: So let's be concrete. What are the, what are the colors involved?
- 37:15 Lena: Okay. Purple, red, black is what I see.
- 37:18 RTH: And so, um, am I recalling... Is my experience of basically trying to re, trying to reconstruct the ear and I'm doing it by, by working with these purple, black, purple, blue and black? Is that what they were?
- 37:41 Lena: Purple, black and red. Yeah.
- 37:42 RTH: Purple. Purple, black and red. Or... So that's one thing that I'm working with the purple, black and red as a way of constructing this recollection: I used those colors in the past and I'm trying to remember it, and I'm putting these color in, in, in which case the colors have a sort of a part-of-the-ear function. *Or* am I interested in the purpleness and the redness and the blackness, and they happened to be the colors that I drew, drew for the ear. But I'm really, I'm really more into the colors themselves than I am the ear function.
- 38:20 Lena: So in me visualizing, I'm (let me try to explain this) um, I, am more focused on the color because it's the only thing that I can remember from the drawing that I did. So I'm not able to remember exactly the function of the ear and the different parts, because I can only remember the colors I used to draw the ear. So I'm trying to remember, but I'm only seeing the colors, if that makes, if that answers your question.
- 38:56 RTH: It does answer my question. And it's an interesting thing, [Lena: Yeah.] 'cause it's sort of half way in between, half way in between the questions that I had posed. And that's the way the world is. The, so, I'm... So let me make sure that I understand it. [Lena: Okay.] I'm, I'm interested in the colors not *particularly* because I am drawn to the purpleness and the redness and the blackness, [Lena: Um hm.] but I'm interested in the colors because I am, because that's the best I can do to reconstruct this ear drawing. [Lena: Yes.] And the colors are as far as I've gotten. [Lena: Yes.] Okay.

39:41 Lena: Correct. Yeah. [Alek: Um hm.]

39:41 Russ comments: In this section (from the beginning at 35:13 to now), Lena has been absolutely consistent in her description of this innerly-seen-colors phenomenon. RTH, by contrast, has been slow to understand her, and indeed has suggested (mildly, to be sure) alternative understandings (that's what he meant by "half way between the questions that I had posed" at 39:03). But Lena was not captured or even influenced by those suggestions. She stuck to her original description until RTH (finally!) understood it. That's good evidence that Lena has adopted the co-investigator role and is not easily influenced by subtle or otherwise pressures from the investigators. She is *not* telling RTH what he wants to hear; she is, apparently, telling him about her experience again and again until he gets it right.

A similar (but shorter) example of Lena's being consistent (and not being swayed by the investigator) was when Alek misunderstood the headless body seeing (from 21:47 to 23:13 above).

39:45 RTH: Okay. And, and I am taking notes, and I am writing "tonotopically." [Lena: Um hm.] And is, and what, and that's in the real world—if I were there watching I would see you write "tonotopically." Is that right? [Lena: Um hm. Yes.] Is that, is that in my experience at all? Or is that just sort of coming out of my hand?

40:10 Lena: Yes. Coming out of my hand. It's like the same with driving. I'm not experiencing myself writing like the word out. Um, it's as I'm writing the word, I am doing what I can to process the word and understand it as I'm writing it. So it's more, I'm focused on processing the word and understanding the word rather than writing it.

40:37 RTH: So my experience is basically entirely on the construction of this ear, imaginary ear drawing, [Lena: Um hm.] which so far, so far is, uh, an arrangement of colors. [Lena: Yes.] And I'm not into the writing. I'm not saying "tonotopically" while I write or anything that's in my experience. All, [Lena: Um hm.] the only thing that's in my experience is this imaginary seeing.

41:03 Lena: Correct. Um hm.

41:08 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good. [Alek: Um hm.]

SAMPLE 8.6 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

41:14 Lena: Perfect. So for beep number 6, um, I did my best to write down as much as I could in the moment 'cause it was a high stress moment. [laughs] Um, my, I was driving. And um, I, uh, [sighs] my daughter was crying and she was hot and was trying to get out of her car seat. Um, so I, at the time of the beep, she was full fledge. And my approach, my, what I was saying to her was, "Can you wait until I can pull over and I'll help you?" And, of course, that didn't work. Um, so I was feeling at the time of the beep, frustrated. And um, but also at the same time, at the same time as frustrated, feeling also, I don't wanna say the word "defeated." I don't know if that's probably going to describe it. But like, like, *Oh, there's nothing I could do.* So I *accepted* it. I accepted that

I'm gonna hear the crying until we get home. So it was like an acceptance to the crying rather than feeling like *I gotta do something immediately*. So I don't know if that, that seems a little complicated. We'll have to just break it down. [laughs]

42:42 AK: Yes. Okay. So, so I think I get the situation. And I'm so sorry that we added a beep on, on top of all of that. [they laugh] But um, is, so let me gather this. So I understand that you're feeling frustrated and this kind of also defeated, accepting, I guess, whatever, she's gonna cry. [Lena: Yes.] Um, is that the, is that the entirety of your experience are your feelings about it? Or is her crying and your saying, "Hey, wait, can I pull over?" Is all of that also in [Lena: Um hm.] your experience at this moment?

43:16 Lena: Yeah. The whole thing is from when she was *crying* to my *offering* to help to *knowing* that that's not going to actually do anything and then *realizing* I should just, I'm just, I have to *accept* the crying so then I can just *get us home* and then deal with it. So it was, um, a process that was happening in my mind of realizing, trying to help, realizing I can't help, and then just accepting that I can't help and then just get home.

43:46 AK: Okay. And where in that sequence does the beep interrupt you?

43:51 Lena: In the process of me, um, accepting that I can't help her. [Alek: Okay.] It was accepting that and she's still crying. So there's that still crying in the background? Yeah. [Alek: Okay.]

44:04 RTH: So before, [Alek: Go ahead.] So before we get on, I'm not sure that I had heard it as a *sequence*. So I'm not sure that I *didn't* hear it as a sequence, either. So, so does that, were you describing an, a *sequence* of, at *first* she was crying and *then* I was saying and *then* I was accepting? Or does all of that stuff seem like it's happening at the same time?

44:23 Lena: To me it's, it feels like it's all happening at the same time. I, I put it as a sequence because I feel like it better shows the experience for me. But for what what's happening is for me, how I'm *experiencing* it, is all of those feelings and her crying all happening at the same time.

44:46 RTH: So she's, as far as, as far as your *experience* is concerned--and that's what we're, what we're interested in is your experience--as far as your experience is concerned, she's crying; [Lena: Yes.] I'm saying "can you wait until we get home?"; [Lena: Yes.] I'm feeling defeated slash frustrated slash accepting, whatever; [Lena: Yes.] and all that, all that stuff seems to be at the same time. [Lena: Yes.] And in order to explain it to us, we sort of sequentialized it or whatever, [Lena: Yes.] but experientially it seems like it's the same time.

45:20 Lena: Yeah. All of that's happening at the same time on top of each other. Very layered process or experience.

45:30 AK: Okay. And at the moment of this beep, does it make sense to, um, break it up at all and say, well, the most prominent thing was her crying? Or the most prominent thing was my feeling frustrated? Or ...?

- 45:45 Lena: The most prominent thing would be her crying *and* my frustration. [Alek: Okay.] Yeah. My frustration to the crying was, was the primary, what stands out the most, was standing out to me the most.
- 46:02 AK: Okay. So she's crying and I'm feeling frustrated about that. [Lena: Um hm.] Okay. And how do, how do, how do you feel frustrated? Like how is that like a bodily thing or a mental thing or,
- 46:16 Lena: Um, both. Yeah. The bodily feels, is there's a tension. Um, and uh, like a stress tension throughout, not anywhere specific, just throughout. And um, and emotionally it's a mental thing. It's a, um, um, (how do I say it?) It's the, the, the, the frustration mentally comes to me as like a, like a, maybe my senses or something are like, the screaming is like emotionally making me like, (I don't know how to, I don't know. I don't know. I can't find a word), but when something very loud is happening and it's just *too loud*, then my senses were getting like [gestures energetically] [Alek: Overwhelmed or...] overwhelmed. Yeah. Yeah. [Alek: inaudible] Yeah. Yeah. So emotionally there was this overwhelmed, overstimulated sensing going on.
- 47:21 AK: And, and is...
- 47:24 RTH: [interrupting] So can I ask you, can I ask a question before we get too far down the road? So we've been talking about frustration. And is that frustration the same thing as we've been talking about the defeated or accepting or...? Is that all just one thing that sometimes we can call frustrated. Sometimes we can call it a defeated, sometimes we can call accepting part? Or does it seem like they're sort of separable things going on?
- 47:45 Lena: The defeated/accepting thing feels more separated than, than the frustration. Um hm.
- 47:53 AK: So these are two separate emotional experiences. [Lena: Correct.] All going on at the same time. Okay.
- 47:58 Lena: Yes. All happening at the same time. Yes. Yeah.
- 47:59 RTH: And is the frustration, then, the same as the loud emotional overload? [Lena: Yes.] So there's not *three* things going on, there are *two* things. [Lena: Yeah.] One is frustration battered by my sense of loud sounds, whatever, [Lena: Um hm.] that's one thing. [Lena: Um hm.] And then defeated and whatever. [Alek: Okay.] [Lena: Correct. Yes.]
- 48:19 AK: So I'm understanding the frustration includes some bodily tension that's not really anywhere specific, just kind of all all over me or just throughout me or whatever. [Lena: Sure (inaudible).] And then also this overstimulated senses-overload thing. [Lena: Yes.] All of that is the frustration about her screaming. [Lena: Yes.]
- 48:43 AK: Okay. And then I also feel defeated/accepting, and that's a different feeling.
- 48:50 Lena: Yes. Yes. So, um, at the time of the frustration, um, and knowing that I can do nothing for her in that moment, I *accepted* the noise. I *accepted* the frustration [inaudible] I

was able to calm down and get home. Like internally I was able to be *okay* with the noise and be *okay* with the crying and the, and the frustration.

49:18 AK: Okay. And is all of that just kind of elaboration on the accepting feeling? Or,... Because I guess there's, there's like a few ways I could hear that. I could hear that really your experience is of calming down. Or really your experience is of feeling acceptance. Or really it's of knowing I can't do anything. Or maybe it's *all* of that. Or *some* of that. Or,

49:40 Lena: Well, the knowing that I can't do anything, that moment, like realizing that, *is* what calmed me down. And I knew that I had to accept the noise if I wanted to get home in one piece. [Alek: Sure] [they laugh]. For my, for myself, you know. So I, yeah. I would say that the calmness was an effect of the acceptance, so to speak. Yeah.

50:07 AK: And about the knowing. So I have realized that there's nothing I can do about this. Is that directly present to me, or is that almost like the memory process we talked about before? Like somewhere in my neurons I've come to that realization, and now I'm feeling some acceptance about it. But really the, the knowing is not in the footlights of my consciousness. It's, it's just contributing to what's going on here.

50:37 Lena: I would say that the knowing is somewhere in between those two things. Yeah.

50:44 AK: Somewhere in between some non-experienced process and some directly experienced. [Lena: Yeah.] Like a cognition? Like is this a ment...? Is this like a...?

50:56 Lena: It's like a familiarity kind of like, *Oh, I know this. I know, I know the situation.* You know, like I understand like she's not hurt, you know, like, like I understand that this is just a very similar, I've been here before with her, so it's like a, I recognize the situation kind of thing. And um, there is a half of me that is aware of that recognition and then this other half of me that it's just automatic.

51:29 AK: Okay. [Lena: Yeah.] So some kind of recognition that is somewhere between directly before the footlights of consciousness and not, just some whatever background process.

51:41 Lena: Yeah, some automatic thing that occurs because of *whatever*. [Alek: Okay.] Yeah. Yeah.

51:49 AK: And that is related to, I'm understanding, that, that I've got like, I'm accepting this, I've got some feeling of accepting, of calm, or something like that.

52:01 Lena: So, yes. In, in realizing and accepting it, um, I was able to, um, be calm for the rest of the drive. Yes. Or not necessarily calm, but I wasn't allowing it to interfere with my, um, mental state of mind any longer.

52:28 AK: Okay. And is that what we had before been calling acceptance?

52:32 Lena: Yes. That would be the part of acceptance. Yeah. [Alek: Okay.] So it was more just like I, I w, in recognizing that it was something that I was familiar with the situation, there was... With that came a, um, not necessarily a calmness per se, but just that I was no

longer permitting it to bother me. [Alek: Okay.] I was, yeah, I was able to just be with it without it bothering me.

53:10 AK: And how do you experience that? Like is that a feeling? Is that a, is that like an intention? Like I'm not here, I'm, I'm not letting it, whatever, or...

53:21 Lena: I wanna say, so I use the word "defeat" because, and it sounds really harsh, but it feels kind of like you're, I'm defeating myself. Like I can't do anything for you. So I'm accepting that I can't do anything. And while it calms me down, I feel this defeat with it. So there is this sense of [throws up her hands] *I give up!* uh, *okay!* You know, *alright, just cry!* kind of. I don't know if that helps and understanding.

53:57 RTH: So, so that, so that, that sounds like there's a difference between *I've given myself permission* and *I have been defeated*. [Lena: Yes.] It seems... That sounds like it's more like I, *well, I've been defeated, and therefore I'm not going to do anything about it*, rather than *I have made some kind of a decision, I'm going to withdraw myself from this situation*.

54:18 Lena: It's both. I know I'm actively choosing to not let it get to me. But there is still an aspect mixed in with that of defeat, of um, that it was out of my control. Like I couldn't control how she, like her temperament in that moment. Um, so there is this sense of defeat in that I couldn't not, like I couldn't control the moment for her. [Alek: Hmm.] [RTH: Okay.] Yeah.

54:52 RTH: And then I have one more question about the frustration. So is, is the frustration (and I'm not sure that this is, uh, makes, makes sense), but, is the frustration aimed at *her*, sort of a *shut the heck up* kind of a thing? Or is it aimed at *me*? I feel this battering, I feel the noise impinging on, on me.

55:19 Lena: Um, it's a mixture of both, but I would say more so it is a frustration towards her. And um, mainly 'cause, um, (and I don't know if this is part of the, the theory that we're trying to bracket out), um, but in that frustration that I'm feeling realizing and, and having that bodily and mental reaction to her, it's, it's like, uh, the sense I'm getting in that moment in that frustration mixed in with that frustration with all the other stuff we talked about, there's this, [throws up her hands] *Oh, she's crying again!* You know, she's crying all over, cries every day, cries every, you know, two seconds, kind of thing. So that's like the frustration is at *her* [Alek: Um hm.] for *what could possibly wrong, be wrong again*, you know, kind of vibe I'm (or not vibe), but like mixed in with all the other feelings that we were talking about. So it's like frustration was a very multilayered feeling, wasn't just purely frustration. There was all that other stuff in there that we were just talking about. [Alek: Yep.] [RTH: I can dig that.].

56:28 RTH: So I'm good! [Alek: Yeah!]

56:31 Lena: Yeah. We got through six beeps! That's so accomplished! [they laugh] [Alek: Yeah!]

56:43 RTH: I think we're getting better at talking about it. [Lena: Yes.] And I'm in favor of doing it again. [Alek: Same.]

56:48 Lena: Sure. Okay. Cool. Then me and Alek will pick a day. [RTH: Okay.].

56:57 AK: Yeah. We'll do that.

56:57 Lena: Cool. Thanks everyone for your time.

57:01 RTH: Thank you. Appreciate it.

57:01 AK: Bye.