

Mel May
Mel Green Meeting Part 1

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the February 24 interview with Mel that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/Z1SfWIrODvI>. 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
Mel = Mel May

What is a "green meeting"

- 0:00 RTH: So our task today is to approximate what you and what, uh, DES calls a "green meeting," which we can't really do the whole, the whole *usual* green meeting because the ob, one of the objects of the green meeting is that it's designed to take place immediately after sampling is done when, when things are sort of fresh. So at the, the last of Mel's sampling is about a year ago now, I think. So we've been lots, fair amount of water over the dam.
- 0:28 But the *philosophy*, the, the *reason* that we do a green meeting is basically to bring back to mind as best we can all of the samples that we have seen, given all of the profit that we have made by talking about all the samples. So the problem with DES is that it's a, the virtue or the problem, the *characteristic* of DES is that it's iterative, which means the skill level in what we understand on the 2nd day and the 3rd day and the 4th day, we think we got better at it when we got to the 11th day and the 12th day or whatever. And so the green meeting is the, is the opportunity to fold our new focus, our new understanding, back on the, on, on the whole process.
- 1:15 And, uh, *output* of a green meeting is basically to, to the, the output of the whole process is, is to describe Mel's experience idiographically (is our term for that), to describe it as Mel experienced it as best we can, regardless of whether Mel is typical of everybody else or, or is entirely unique. Our object is to describe Mel. And the green meeting is one *step* in, in that direction because it allows us to focus on each individual sample.
- 1:49 The *output* of the green meeting is, I guess, I guess we've all just been through one of these with Kerry, so I guess maybe I don't need to, to describe it too much fully cuz you will have seen the, the Excel file and the, and the opportunity it gives us to think critically about every individual sample. So that would be what I would say as the preamble. Anybody got anything else that they want to say about that?
- 2:20 JBK: No. [Mel shakes her head negatively]

- 2:22 RTH: And then I would say I sent you all a, just this morning a document which I'm now opening. It's a pretty big document because it's, it is the unadorned file of all of our descriptions from what I take to be the most, the most recent descriptions, which is a little bit complicated actually. But I tried to do the best I could, and I gave a list in the beginning of this document as to [Mel: Mm-hmm.] what it is, which I think I opened it, but now I can't find it. I didn't open it. There it is. And shall I share my screen here? Is that the,
- 3:12 JBK: Uh, yeah,
- 3:20 RTH: I'm still getting something that looks like "98% uploading." I, I don't know what I'm up uploading on Riverside.
- 3:28 JBK: Oh, that's just your video that uploads as it goes. [RTH: Uhhuh.] But that doesn't have anything to do with screen sharing. The share's in the bottom.
- 3:36 RTH: So share a screen and share a win—. Share an entire screen. Let's do that. So this is the document that I sent you a little bit ago. Everybody see that? [JBK: Mm-hmm.]
- 4:02 RTH: And our usual procedure is to start at the, at the bottom end and work backwards. [JBK: Mm-hmm.]. And the bottom end for our descriptions with Mel is day 13, I think. Is that right? Or is it 14?
- 4:19 JBK: Uh, yeah, we discarded the double DES stuff and then 13. Yeah.
- 4:19 Russ comments: The original set of Mel interviews included days 14 and 15, which were conducted using a protocol called dDES, which Julian created and Russ found misguided. There is some commentary about dDES in Mel Interview 11 starting at about 32:23.

Focusing on sample 13.1

- 4:31 RTH: So here is day 13. [he scrolls to sample 13.1 through some commentary] So what I would say about this is that this is a sensory awareness of the pin prickly, [he types in green "Sensory awareness bodily"] and then I, what we're calling *autopilot*. [He types in green "autopilot"]
- 5:37 JBK: [Mel: Mm-hmm.].
- 5:49 RTH: And autopilot is something that's just sort of barely an experience.
- 5:54 JBK: Yeah. It's interesting to come, come back to this experience and put some kind of code to it. But *autopilot* seems, seems just. I mean we talked about that a lot and it seemed to aptly describe some things that were kind of nothing, bit more than totally nothing, hard to tell.
- 6:20 Mel: Yeah. Already this feels very interesting to return to after all of Kerry's.

- 6:26 JBK: [Mel: Mm-hmm.].
- 6:28 RTH: Yeah. Kerry, Kerry was a good choice for us in the sense that she's very different from Mel, which most everybody is very difficult, different from Mel, I think, so that wasn't, wasn't a hard target to hit! But, but there was very little autopilot-y stuff [Mel: Mm.] in Kerry's experience. Onward?
- 6:54 JBK: Yep. [Mel: Yep.] [pause] So unsymbolized thinking? It is interesting that it's that specific phrase, though. It's slightly maybe like some, some subcategory.

Focusing on sample 13.2

- 7:32 Mel: [RTH scrolls to sample 13.2.] Now this is a nice sample, me sharing that I needed to pee. Cool! [laughs]
- 7:38 RTH: Yeah. Up until that time I had thought that you never had to pee! [they laugh]
- 7:44 RTH: So, so that specific phrase, if that was present to me, present to Mel, which is apparently what we were trying to say in our description, that would be a *words present*. That is sort of the definition of *words present*. [JBK: Okay.] But then we undermined that with what, by saying it might not have been present.
- 7:44 Russ comments: DES draws a distinction between *unsymbolized thinking* (the experience of thinking a specific thought without words or other symbols) and *words present* (the experience of thinking specific words without those words being experienced as being (innerly or outerly) spoken, heard, or seen).
Unsymbolized thinking includes cases where the experienced thought is so specific that it could be expressed in one and only one set of words, even if those words are not present at the moment of the beep. There, the distinction between unsymbolized thinking and words present is often hard to make.
- 8:26 JBK: Just, it's almost like those *words* aren't present, but they're so apt to describing the concept that is present that... I dunno.
- 8:38 Mel: I feel like that what you're trying to describe there, Julian resonates with what I experience in terms of... Yeah, cuz I'm reading this back and being like, hmm. Sort of like, unsymbolized thinking sort of feels like an oxymoron when you're like, *it's specifically this phrase*! But, um, I know what this feels like, or what this experience is. And it's exactly what you were just trying to say, Julian. Of like, it is, maybe it is that like, that that thought, that concept is so tightly described by those words, like you said, because it's, it is so clearly a certain concept, a certain thing that I am thinking, but it's not like my voice or, uh... Like the language doesn't really seem that present and it's not spelled out like, what do I have at 3? It's like all at once the idea of what do I have at 3? If that makes any sense at all. [While she is talking, Russ types in green: "Unsymbolized thinking Words present????"]
- 9:39 JBK: Okay. Yeah. I think that that makes sense. I wonder what to call it as a code, but [Mel: Mm.] maybe you, Russ, you have, you've been doing this longer [laughs].

Coding vs. Description

9:39 Russ comments: RE “ I wonder what to call it as a code” and (5:54) “It’s interesting to ... put some kind of code to it”

The object of DES is *not* to assign a code to anything. Not now, not ever. The object (all along, and eventually when we write an overall description) is to describe Mel’s experience with fidelity; to create words that rest lightly on Mel’s experience. Coding is dangerous to the DES descriptive project.

Coding is the decision about whether an experience fits into a category. Description is the choosing of words that lead the reader / hearer in the direction of the experience. The intention behind coding is to keep the meanings of some small number of codes invariant across occasion and across people. The intention behind description is to use any of a large number of words whose meanings are accepted as varying flexibly across occasions and across people. The *raison d’être* for coding is to count, to compare across people and occasions. The *raison d’être* for description is to reveal individuals as they are.

Coding : validity :: description : fidelity.

The extent to which JBK’s interest is in coding is the extent to which he will be *unable* to describe with fidelity.

To code is to bring the categories front and center, to put the categories between you and Mel; the categories interfere with your ability to apprehend Mel’s experience as it is. Russ sometimes calls this the tyranny of the categories. To describe is to bring Mel front and center, to have as little between your abilities allow.

To code is to look backwards, at the categories as they were described yesterday. To describe is to look present-wards, to encounter Mel as she is now regardless of how she was yesterday or will be tomorrow.

To code is to be constrained by your own interests and theories; to code is to be interested in Julian. To describe is to bracket your own interests and theories; to describe is to suspend Julian, to put Julian out of play, to be interested as purely in Mel as Julian can muster.

To code is to let Mel exist only as she fits a categorization; to describe is to let Mel exist as Mel exists, with as little coercion or distortion as can be managed.

If Mel’s experience is, when apprehended with fidelity, similar or identical to experiences that others have, then it makes sense to use the same words with Mel as we have used with others. So if Mel’s experience here was what we have called *unsymbolized thinking* elsewhere, then we might as well call it *unsymbolized thinking* here. But that would *not* be the result of a coding exercise; it would be the result of trying to let words (including but by no means restricted to *unsymbolized thinking*) rest easily on Mel’s experience.

9:53 RTH: So the, the code is *not* the important thing. The code is the conversation that we’re having right now. [JBK: Yeah.] And the question, the question that I’m having about the conversation right now is how much of that is coming just from the language, from what we have written in the description. So I’m more, I’m, and, and I would say that this is the disadvantage of ha, of doing the green meeting a year later. [Mel: Mm-hmm.] If we, a year ago we might have been able to, to recall this particular sample as it is, I can’t recall this particular sample. [Mel: Mm.] [JBK: Mm.] And so, yeah, and so

we're, we're constrained by the words. [Mel: Yep.] Now I do think we did a pretty good job of writing down the words, but, but we can't do any better than what we've, what we've written down right now. And, and so it seems like what, what we have written here is "unsymbolized thinking."

9:53 Russ comments: Note that the process does *not* code this sample. The output of the green meeting is to *suggest* that *unsymbolized thinking* might be an appropriate characterization, but allows as how "words present" is still a possibility. Perhaps we will want to adjust these descriptors as we encounter other samples in this meeting.

10:55 JBK: Does seem maybe closer to that. [RTH: And then...] I also wonder, cuz Mel, like you read these experiences come to you or you can kind of fit it with what it might be like, but it's still, it still might be a different thing [Mel: Mm-hmm.] at the time. But I see how you could, could read that and, and, and kind of like, return to it in some way or, or what that would feel like.

11:29 RTH: So after, after a year, it would be hard for me to believe that Mel can remember exactly the de, the detail that we're talking about here, about this particular sample.

11:29 Russ comments: He wouldn't believe it after a few days. And he does not think that Mel (or anyone else) has infallible or incorrigible recollection of her experience.

11:39 Mel: I absolutely cannot. Yeah. So anything I offer is absolutely generalized [laughs].

11:46 JBK: Alright.

11:55 RTH: And then there's the sensory about pee. [He types in green "Sensory awareness bodily"]

11:58 JBK: [Mel: Mm-hmm.].

12:02 RTH: Anything more about that?

12:05 JBK: No, I think we can move on.

Focusing on sample 13.3

12:14 JBK: This one [sample 13.3] seems more like a, a dormant one. Like some you called *autopilot* and some you said was more dormant, like there was like nothing.

12:29 RTH: So the description for me, the distinction for me between nothing and autopilot is that on *autopilot* some skilled activity is taking place with no other experience. And on *nothing* there isn't any other experience, any other action. So this seems to me like *nothing*.

13:04 JBK: This one does seem more nothing. I mean, Yeah. In DES we never argue that it's totally a hundred percent nothing. Cuz you can't prove that. There, like there might be some basic visual input or whatever. So that's why we sometimes say like "or very

little,” but it’s like to the best of our understanding, there wasn’t anything directly in experience.

13:32 RTH: Right.

13:34 Mel: Mm-hmm.

13:39 RTH: And, and I guess the distinction for that is that the, the *autopilot*: people have people fairly frequently have autopilot experiences. *Nothing in experience* is fairly unusual.

13:56 JBK: Mm-hmm

Focusing on sample 13.4

13:56 RTH: Onward? [Scrolls to sample 13.4]

13:58 Mel: Mm-hmm.

13:59 JBK: Sure.

14:02 RTH: Same deal?

Focusing on sample 13.5

14:03 JBK: A nothing one. [RTH scrolls to sample 13.5] It’s, um, it’s absorbed, I guess we call this absorbed, like in listening. I almost don’t know if we need to divide absorbed into what, like in listening or watching or whatever. I’m not sure about that.

14:40 Mel: Hmm. Yeah. That sort of reminds me of a conversation that we had one time about watching movies and stuff. Does that ring a bell for you, Julian?

14:51 JBK: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. There was one day when you were watching *Saltburn*.

14:56 Mel: Yeah.

14:56 JBK: Do you mean that and there were a lot of [Mel: Yeah.] You being absorbed and watching the movie.

15:00 Mel: Yes.

15:02 JBK: Yeah. It seems very similar to that. Yeah. I mean, it’s a conversation and it’s your friend Liv.

15:08 Mel: And I’m, I just am absorbed in that in a similar way that I would be very absorbed in watching a movie if nothing else was distracting me or whatever.

15:19 JBK: Yeah. You just locked in, pretty much

- 15:21 Mel: Locked in, locked in is a nice phrase for some of my samples. [JBK: Yeah.]
- 15:31 RTH: So what I, what I think, gathering from this conversation that we've just been having is that *absorbed* is I'm taking it in, I'm not adding anything or focusing on any particular aspect. [JBK: Mm-hmm.]. [RTH types in green "Absorbed (taking it in, not adding anything, not focused on any particular aspect)"] [Mel: Hmm.]
- 16:07 RTH: So that's, that's what we mean by *absorbed*. [JBK: Yeah.] Are we, are we in agreement about that? [JBK: Yeah.][Mel: Yeah.]
- 16:15 JBK: And we had these long conversations where I first wanted to say it was content free because you weren't pulling out any one thing to focus on. Or like, you would sometimes say, *yeah, I was absorbed in the conversation, but I, I couldn't tell you what we were talking about*. [Mel: Mmm.] And it almost doesn't matter for me to explain that for me to convey this experience and [Mel: Mm-hmm.]. Yeah. So I feel like not adding anything, not focused on any particular aspect kind of conveys that, but I don't think it's true that it's content free because you are like, you are ta, taking in what you know, what your friend's saying.
- 16:55 RTH: Yeah. Right. That was the conversation that we had. [Mel: Yeah.] It seems, it seems to me that this is totally con, she's totally into the content.
- 17:01 Mel: Correct. Yeah, I was about to say, it's almost the opposite to content *free*. [RTH: Right?] The content is incredibly important, [JBK: Yeah.] but I like that thing that you've said of, but not focusing on any *particular* aspect within that. Then it would be a different description, [JBK: Yeah.] but broadly when it's that absorbed description. Yeah. I'm very locked in listening or watching whatever is coming, but there's no particulars that are Yeah. Yep, yep, yep.
- 17:29 JBK: Yep.

Focusing on sample 13.6

- 17:31 RTH: Onward? [Scrolls to sample 13.6.]
- 17:32 JBK: Mm-hmm.
- 17:32 Mel: Yep. God, my brain!
- 17:53 JBK: [laughs] Uh you're reading, you, you're registering. It's not quite, it's not as absorbed—you're kind of just picking up on it. I mean, I understand the experience. I don't know for coding, if you would call that kind of like unsymbolized thinking or just reading or registering or, or what?
- 18:19 RTH: So I wouldn't call it at all unsymbolized thinking. I *would* say it's reading. [Mel: Mm.] And *something* about the words, but slightly.

18:38 JBK: Yeah. You're registering it as well-wishes. But it's more about registering that than like, I reading the words "feel better." Like there's definitely no inner speaking of feel better. [RTH types in green "Reading with comprehension"]

18:55 Mel: Yeah. That feels like an apt phrase, even though that seems like a really, um, straightforward phrase, like "reading with comprehension." Nice work, 12-year-old! [JBK laughs] But that's, I feel like that sort of says what we're trying to say of like, yeah, it's registering like it's almost autopilot-y, but not in a sense of like reading and doing what one should hope reading does of understanding.

19:20 RTH: Right. That that's, I agree with that.

19:23 Mel: So "reading with comprehension" feels right, but also feels very dumb. [laughs].

19:30 RTH: So I have sampled with people who, who do register words one word at a time. I've written some about that sampling with people like that, [Mel: Hmm?!] but I don't think that's Mel here. [Mel: unh-unh.] [JBK: No.] It's not like she is focusing on the words "feel better." [Mel: Mm-hmm.] She is, she is receiving the transmission that the, in that the creator of the words "feel better" intended, at least approximately.

19:30 Russ comments: RE "I've written some about that sampling with people like that"
See Chapters II and III in Caracciolo & Hurlburt, 2016.

20:00 Mel: Yep.

20:03 RTH: That's what with comprehension means to me. [Mel: Yep.] So I'm, I'm not sure there's anything else to be said about that.

20:11 JBK: It is a simple way to say it, but in terms of Mel being like, *oh, that's so 12-year-old*. I mean, reading with comprehension is actually, I don't wanna judge the experience and say it's good or bad or whatever, but

20:24 Mel: No, go off Julian!

20:26 JBK: It's not a, it's not a bad, like I think if everybody read with comprehension, the world would be a good place. [laughs]

20:32 RTH: Certainly be a, certainly be a different, different place!

Julian comments: I started saying I didn't want to judge as good or bad and then leaned towards the "good" category. Russ made it more neutral. I wanted to reassure Mel I didn't find this sample or others oversimplistic / basic / whatever. There's an argument to be made for the virtue of being absorbed or carried along by something or someone without adding anything extra, theorizing, singling out, meta-cognizing, whatever. I may have pushed that argument too far, but I at least didn't want Mel to feel ashamed of that type of experience.

20:35 Mel: Yeah. I agree.

- 20:39 RTH: Alright, so I'm gonna save this. This is after the green meeting and we're gonna move on to day 12? [Mel: Mm-hmm.]
- 20:57 JBK: Yep. [He scrolls across a substantial amount of interchange between Julian and Russ] [laughs].
- 21:03 RTH: We apparently had a conversation or two about day 12! [Mel: Ooh!] [JBK laughs]. [Scrolling arrives at 12.1]

Focusing on sample 12.1

- 21:16 RTH: Oh, this was the empathetic conversation.
- 21:18 JBK: Yeah. The feeling, em, empathetic feeling like it's clear that you're not feeling your only loneliness. I mean your own loneliness, [Mel: Hmm!] that you're feeling like this character's, [pause while RTH types "Reading with empathic of character's feeling" I don't know if reading was experienced besides the feeling itself. I feel like reading is almost a parenthetical to the feeling. I, because like you're reading skillfully, but it's not like particular focus on any word or anything as part of this. I don't think.
- 22:18 RTH: So. In the previous day we called one sample reading with comprehension.
- 22:25 JBK: Yeah.
- 22:26 RTH: In what ways would it have been make sense to call that reading with comprehension, but not this?
- 22:33 JBK: I don't know, I might be wrong.
- 22:36 Mel: Yeah. I sort of feel like this would be the same as reading with comprehension, but challenge me if I'm just using that as a fact to get to this. But for me, like the reading with comprehension is then what is related to the empathetic feeling. So I feel like I can't have the empathetic feeling without the reading with comprehension, but happy to be challenged on that.
- 22:58 JBK: I feel like the comprehension is the feeling. So I don't think, think, I don't think they're separate. For me saying reading with empathetic with or yeah, with empathy of characters feelings would feel better than separating reading and then empathy. Like, I don't think there's a separate reading and then like empathy feeling [Mel: Mm-hmm.]
- 23:23 JBK: So yeah, this, this seems good to me. Or maybe with better grammar, but [laughs] "with empathy." I don't know. [laughs] empathy. [RTH changes green text to read "Reading with empathy for character's feeling"] Yeah.

23:53 RTH: So reading... What “reading with comprehension” meant in sample 13.5 (or whatever it was) [Mel: Mm-hmm.] was, I’m reading what somebody wrote without adding anything to it. Somebody was sending me well wishes; I was receiving well wishes.

24:13 Mel: [Mel: Mm-hmm.]

24:16 RTH: Here, I am reading with comprehension and I’m receiving what somebody wrote. But, but I am, I’m more specific about it, I guess. I’m specifically feeling it. [Mel: Mm-hmm.] Rather than just comprehending it. Mm. Is that the distinction we’re trying to make here?

24:36 Mel: [Mel: Mm-hmm.] Yeah,

24:38 JBK: Yeah. That makes sense to me. And then the sensory awareness of body. [RTH types “SA bodily”]

25:01 Mel: I wa, I wonder, um (this may be something that we would, um, recall better if we could all recall the samples before we went into them). But obviously like reading with empathy for character’s feelings feels incredibly *niche* in terms of like, you know, the spreadsheet and things like that. Which Russ, I know we’re not supposed to get too caught up in, but in terms of like, is it a category that perhaps pops up that’s more just empathy or something? But I don’t, I don’t know if it’s a theme that happens more than once.

25:36 RTH: So if what you’re saying is that “reading with empathy for characters feeling” seems too weak...

25:42 Mel: Too *niche*.

25:44 JBK: Yeah.

25:46 RTH: And I’m not sure what, I’m not sure what I mean what you meant by *niche*, but,

25:51 Mel: Um, like that it’s such a, a one-of-a-kind sample in terms of like, is there a category that would apply to more experiences that still describes it? Just in terms of generally like, oh, this is empathy.

26:08 JBK: I see what you mean.

26:10 Mel: Do you? Or like trying to be too broad or whatever. But, you know,

26:13 JBK: I think that makes sense. Like if it’s the only sample with that code, then okay, why do we need a code? But I, I feel like that can also be something in the next step [he refers to the rectification meeting], where we try to look at everything and then see if we can find like we might find another experience of empathy and it makes sense to talk about those together. [Mel: Yep.] But I think, I think we could also do that in the next step as well. [Mel: Yep.] But I, I, I see what you mean about, yeah. That, that could be a really niche kind of code.

26:51 RTH: And but, but that conversation inspired me, I guess you would say, to make it, to make it more strong. It wasn't that she was just reading with empathy. She was creating a feeling within herself that wasn't... [JBK: Yeah.] That feeling came from the character.

27:10 JBK: Yeah.

27:11 RTH: Came from the *description*. But she *felt* it. She wasn't just noticing that the guy was sad. She was feeling sad or whatever that, whatever that was.

27:24 Mel: Yeah. And again, at risk of me generalizing, cuz that's what I always do, but like that feels like, um, an experience that happens a lot. Like, so that feels like a more helpful description in some ways. Cuz I suspect that comes up more.

27:41 JBK: Yeah. I think there are other empathy samples. [Mel: Yeah.] I mean, it's not too generalizing if once we actually go through and that's what we're doing, like seeing each through other samples like that.

27:51 Mel: Yeah.

27:54 RTH: And then about the *niche*. I think that'll, that'll come out of the process. I don't think we need to worry about that. If it'll, if it is niche, then we'll this'll be the only one. And my recollection is that there were in the bodily senses, there's gonna be other things that are something about feeling the boddle about it body being pressed down. I don't, I don't, I'm not that specific in my recollection, but it seemed like it was worthwhile noticing that, uh, [types "(pressing down/weight/heavy)" after "SA bodily"]

28:26 JBK: Yeah, I think you're right.

28:30 RTH: [Mel: Interesting.] And we might be wrong about that, but the, that will fall away if it's

28:35 Mel: [Mel: Mm-hmm.].

28:39 RTH: So onward?

28:40 JBK: Onwards,

28:41 RTH: Which might be several pages down here [scrolls across much text] [Mel laughs]

28:59 RTH: We took it seriously! You gotta give us credit for that!

29:01 JBK: [laughs] If I got it on the first try, you know, we wouldn't have to do all that. [laughs].

29:09 RTH: My, my general principle, by the way is that if, if I have anything to say that, that I think is I, that is that it actually is important, it takes at least three tries for me to transmit it to somebody. [Mel: (laughs) Mm-hmm.]. The first, the first time if, if somebody understands what I said the first time, then it wasn't important! [laughs]

29:09

Russ comments: This is how I understand that. If I criticize (say) Julian, and he understands the criticism, then I am pointing out something that is in the realm of shared reality—he and I agree about this particular fact. It is *not* important that I pointed it out—he would have eventually figured it out on his own, adding one more fact to his collection of facts.

But if I criticize Julian and he *doesn't* really understand the criticism, or he understands it but it doesn't stick, *then* I am pointing out something that is in the realm of delusion—he and I do *not* agree about the nature of reality in this instance. Now it *is* important that I point it out, and then point it out again with a different slant or in a different situation, and then point it out again with yet a different perspective—because it is the nature of delusion that people do *not* figure things out on their own. Perhaps with repetition (to the extent that I'm right and I'm skillful in my presentation to a delusional audience, and Julian is ready) then the reality might be able to seep in around Julian's delusion defenses.

RE “in the realm of delusion...to the extent that I'm right”

If we are in the realm of delusion, I have no warrant to believe that the delusion is Julian's; it may be mine, or it may be Julian's, or both, or neither. So I do *not* have a warrant to say: “Julian, you are deluded.” I have a right to say that my delusion-detecting antennae are jangling and to try to explain what I think is going. But if I'm honest, I will have to acknowledge that I may well be projecting my own delusion onto Julian, and it is that nature of projection that I will be blind to that. I can say that across 50 years of trying to do this kind of thing, I have a pretty good batting average—that, I believe, is a true statement. But that does not at all mean that I am right in the present situation. It means, I think, that there is warrant to take seriously what I have to say, not because it is true but because I have a track record of trying to stick to the truth.

It is a fundamental dilemma: I want to operate in the realm of delusion, because that's where things are important. But I don't have a warrant for believing that what I say in that realm is true. It's a tenet of test theory that the true value of something being measured is likely to be the obtained measurement times the reliability coefficient. I see that as a metaphor for the dilemma: I try to be reliable, and try to increase my reliability, but I recognize that my reliability is less than perfect, and therefore that what I am trying to say is likely to be less extreme than I think it is.

In our conversations, Mel and Julian noticed that I characteristically speak in a very tentative, qualified manner, and wondered whether that was a personality characteristic of mine or something that I learned from DES. [Kerry's debrief interview at 1:37:20; and Mel's green meeting 2 at 52:20] My sense is that my tentative, qualified manner is the result of accepting that in the arena where I think things are important, I do not have a warrant to be dogmatic. Whether that is cause, effect, or reinforcing cycle, I don't know.

29:29 JBK: That's interesting.

29:30 Mel: This, because I, I as you will recall, definitely wanted to stay outta the transcripts for this cuz I wanted to not know too much about the background chat, and academic chat that was happening, right? [Mel: Mm-hmm.]. What is most of this about here? Is

this about the empathy aspect? Or is this... What would, can you, do you remember what this chat was?

29:51 JBK: Yeah, it was about empathy. And I think I was arguing that it's possible that just having this feeling that there's nothing for us to know and distinguish just having this feeling from it being an empathetic feeling. So it could just be like, you have like a lonely feeling. Like how do we know [Mel: Mmm.] that this is empathetic? And then rest was arguing: No, it's empathetic. It's the character's feeling. It's intrinsically just different from if you were feeling yourself lonely, depressed, whatever. But it took a lot of arguing and convincing for me to [laughs] drop my kind of notion.

30:36 RTH: So I agree with everything Julian just said. And uh, and this was the schematic that I [laughs] created to try to get this. [scrolls to a stick figure in the document] So this was Jane feeling lonely. [Mel: Yes.] And this is Mel feeling lonely. And this is Mel Empathetically feeling, Jane's feeling, [Mel: Mm-hmm.] which is different from just Mel feeling lonely on her, on her own. This is somehow Mel wrapping herself around Jane.

Julian comments: My problems with understanding Mel were in some ways the inverse of my problems understanding Kerry. With Kerry, I often wasn't bracketing the natural world enough. I would write that Kerry was seeing light glimmer of the leaves of a birch tree (sample 4.3), instead of that she was seeing the twinkly green-ness in the middle of a tree. I was distracted by the natural world—the birch tree, rather than seeing Kerry's experience—the twinkly green.

With Mel, I often bracketed the natural world too much. If Mel couldn't recount any details of a movie she was watching, I wanted to call it content free. I even considered writing "Mel was carried along by [a movie]," using the square brackets to indicate that the movie itself was not experienced. And here I was skeptical about calling it an empathetic feeling instead of just feeling—how do we know it's intrinsically different to if Mel just felt lonely-depressed? But this was an overreach and cut Mel off from the world as she experienced it.

The answer to over-bracketing or under-bracketing is that description has to be guided exclusively by experience. Bracketing is not some theoretical framework we impose. It comes ground-up from paying attention to the experience.

31:03 Mel: Yes.

31:04 RTH: And it ends up with a feeling, but it's an empathetic feeling rather than just a feeling.

31:08 Mel: Yes. [JBK: Mm-hmm.]

31:11 RTH: And it took us several pages to,

31:14 Mel: Oh, and then what are Mel and Jane doing there?!? Oh! The drinking aspect! [they laugh]

- 31:14 Russ comments: The passage Mel was reading was about the character's drinking her sadness away.
- 31:26 RTH: Yeah. So part of, part of the discussion that, that we had, Mel, was that it wasn't that, it wasn't that Mel has a feeling about *drinking*. [Mel: Hmm.] Mel has, has a feeling that was *Jane's feeling* about drinking.
- 31:49 Mel: Mm-hmm.
- 31:56 RTH: But it seems like we've come from what, from the beginning of this discussion that we've, that we're now in agreement that we should call this an empathic feeling.
- 32:05 JBK: Yeah. That was, [Mel: Absolutely.] that was the conclusion.

Focusing on sample 12.2

- 32:07 Mel: Yeah. Yep. [RTH scrolls to sample 12.2. They pause to read] What was I *doing* here?!? What's this stand for? [RTH types "Nothing" in green] What sort of life am I living? Why was I laying on the ground just doing nothing? It all does come across, across as a little bit, is *she depressed*? Isn't it? It's, I'm really *not*. I definitely, even back then, I know I was *not*. But it reads that way sometimes.
- 32:44 RTH: So, and it never came across to me as depressed. [Mel: Yeah...] It came across to me as, as fairly unusual, not adding anything to the, your surroundings. [Mel: Mm. Mmm!] And and I, I, I think there might be something that's quite highly skillful about that. I mean, I don't, it's not my job to, to make a judgment about that, but, but I think the meditators, [Mel: Mm.] people who take meditation seriously, y'know, they, meditation is sometimes called like a clear lake. I wanna, I wanna reflect, I want my lake to reflect what's around [Mel: Mm.] rather, rather than a wavy lake, which, where I see my own waves kind of a deal. [Mel: Mm.] And your lake is pretty clear. [Mel: Mm.] And I'm not, I'm not trying, I'm *not* trying to say that I think you are evolved to some higher level, [Mel laughs] cuz that's not, that is not my job. But it's, I'm trying to counter the, the *opposite* of that,
- 33:56 Mel: The dead-inside bit.
- 33:58 RTH: Right, right, right! [they laugh]. Right.
- 34:01 Mel: Because that's the conversation I regularly have with people when they do this. Whoa. You are like just running around in some enlightened state. I'm like, *Or*, I'm a bit dead inside [laughs]. Depends who's describing. Anyway. But that's just like, what time of day is this? Why am I Yeah, at 2:30 PM. Why am I laying on the ground doing nothing at 2:30 PM?

Focusing on sample 12.3

- 34:28 RTH: I don't know. [Moves cursor over sample 12.3] So this is sensory awareness auditory, pretty straightforwardly. [Types "SA auditory" in green]

Focusing on sample 12.4

- 34:47 RTH: [scrolls to sample 12.4] [they pause to read] So it seems to me that this is the hearing equivalent of reading with comprehension. [RTH types “hearing convo with comprehension” in green]
- 35:20 Mel: Correct. Or the, um, similarly like with the *absorbed* description that we had here [reads softly] in convo with comprehension. Yeah. Yeah. Which is a similar thing to what we used the word *absorbed* for. What did we describe as *absorbed* before?
- 35:46 RTH: That was, it was a conversation. I believe, you were, it was in a conversation.
- 35:50 Mel: Yeah, that’s right. I was listening to, to Liv.
- 35:52 RTH: So should we call this *absorbed*?
- 35:55 Mel: I, I’m, I’m, I don’t care here. Like it depends. Hang on. What do we think describes it more? Um,
- 36:05 RTH: So the question is whether abs, whether there, whether there are *degrees of absorption*. [Mel: Yeah.] Taking in, taking in with understanding what is meant; or more deeply
- 36:26 Mel: I don’t think there are really degrees, generalization. I don’t think there are really degrees for me, though. Like I’m absorbed or I’m not. Like I lock in and listen or I don’t, or I watch a movie or there’s a clear distraction. I don’t think there’s really, it’s fairly black and white if I can recall things properly.
- 36:46 RTH: So may would, where would we talked about *absorbed*? Would that be the same thing as *receiving*? This is *receiving*, she’s, she’s speaking and I’m receiving it. Mel: Mm. Mm.] [scrolls to sample 13.5] This was the Liv...,
- 37:25 Mel: So that’s what we’re saying isn’t an exact.
- 37:30 RTH: So would
- 37:33 Mel: It feels slightly different here, doesn’t it? Because this I can half remember (as well as anyone can) Yeah. Listening not jotting down what the topic of conversation was, but I’m absolutely engaged in it and whatever. Whereas the one we were just looking at feels like listening but some deeper meaning attached to the fact that I’m then thinking about there are tickets still available or something in association with what was it. I don’t know. It feels like splitting hairs though. I’m convincing myself less as I talk.
- 38:10 RTH: So the question is about the *deeply*.
- 38:13 Mel: Yeah.

- 38:14 RTH: Is there a distinction to be made about the, when Liv is speaking here [sample 13.5] and when whoever it was that was speaking in the previous beep [sample 12.4],
- 38:26 Mel: I don't,
- 38:26 JBK: Is there some difference in the, um.. Like here you're not, you couldn't even pick apart what she was saying. Saying or the exact topic. [Mel: The particulars.] and the, in the other sample, like you, you knew the words. But I feel like if there are levels of absorption, it seems, and I guess we'll see as we go along, but sometimes you didn't even say what the topic was or what the words were. And it seems like those are like more deeply absorbed.
- 39:00 Mel: Well, I think the only difference for me is to do with what you said before about um, uh, what did you Oh yeah, particular aspect, right? In this description we had in green here absorbed taking it in, not focused on any particular aspect. Whereas in the one we were just looking at, when I'm listening to my sister, I am focused on a particular aspect. That is the only difference. Otherwise I would say they're the same *level of absorption* or same like *receiving*, same *locked in*. But in the other one I focused on a particular aspect.
- 39:35 JBK: And I think like there are risks to trying to sort out levels of absorption because it seems, I mean, even if it's true that you are sometimes more deeply absorbed, like it seems like that's gonna be us having to impose some things and, and maybe make arbitrary categories. And it seems better to focus on the one thing we can distinguish, which is yeah. Here you weren't focused on any particular aspect, and, and then the other one you were,
- 40:06 RTH: So when I would, when I would write not focused on any particular aspect, I wouldn't, I wouldn't have said about the other one that she was focused on a particular aspect. She was, she particular, particular aspect would mean like, um, the sound of the voice or the, she's talking about this particular scene and I'm remembering my, my reactions with somebody, you know. [Mel: Mm-hmm.] This, this is more like Liv, like Mel has... So now we're back to the content free content discussion. [Mel: Mm-hmm.]. This, this is more content free than the other one. The other one you're getting the con the content. She's telling you about tickets or whatever and you're absorbing the content. And here it's not, it's not... Content *free* isn't, right. It's sort of like content *transcendent*. It's like, it's
- 41:10 JBK: Yeah, we did, yeah. This was, if you wanna know, like our long written discussions are about like, a bunch of them were on this. And yeah, I think we at one point settled a *non-particularizing* is something we could say about it. Like you're really not picking out any one [Mel: Mm-hmm.]. Thing or even topic, I mean, you're absorbing it like, like what's being said, but you're like, after the beep you, you couldn't even say exactly what it was about because it's so much about just Liv and your dynamic and everything that kind of like transcending any one topic. [RTH appends "content transcendent" to the green caption of sample 13.5]

- 41:50 Mel: Yeah. I mean all of that feels really reflective of my experience. So that's like comforting to know that like, yeah, I think you guys are totally on the right path. Of course, someone as pretentious as me would have something like *content transcendent* [JBK laughs] as a description. Um, but if anything, I would just say that, um, experientially, like these two samples from where I'm sitting and can recall feel pretty similar. So like the, the thing that we're pulling apart here is fairly minor in terms of that, um, act of, or that experience of being super absorbed in a conversation and it happening. And like that is pretty much always the same. Which goes back to what I was saying about like, I don't really think there's too many levels to it and stuff. Um, *content transcendent* feels nice, but yeah, it's, I don't think there's a great difference between this and the other one. Despite me being able to give you a piece of content in the other description. Experientially, they feel quite similar to me.
- 43:02 RTH: So it could very well be that *Julian and I* amplified un, amplified over, over amplified the, the deal about content because he wanted to say things were totally content free, and I would say, and I wanted to say there was a lot of content in here. [Mel: Mm-hmm.] So we may have been making more about the content than it deserved.
- 43:27 JBK: It's definitely something that struck me [Mel: Mm.] was like very different to how I understood experience. [Mel: Mm.] If you would say I was watching a movie, but then in conveying that, like telling what particular scene or what was happening, if it was like a kiss or a car chase didn't seem important to you to convey. Like, you're like, *yeah, I was just locked in* and that was, I had trouble understanding that actually.
- 43:58 Mel: Yeah.
- 43:59 JBK: So
- 44:00 Mel: Yeah.
- 44:01 RTH: Well we're gonna get to those. [Mel: Yeah. Yeah.] So are we happy with this? And then we're gonna go and, and
- 44:08 JBK: Yeah. Let's, let's go on for now.
- 44:10 RTH: Go back to wherever it was we were, which was 12.5, maybe? No, no it wasn't 12.5. 12.4, maybe. Yeah. [Mel: Mm-hmm.]
- 44:31 RTH: So what we said about that other one, which I copied just so that we could see it. [Mel: Mm-hmm.]. We said "absorbed taking it in." This is what we said about the Liv conversation.
- 44:44 JBK: Yeah. So absorbed and listening, registering.
- 44:51 Mel: Yeah. Like from my end, it's the same experience. I've just been able to, on this occasion, recall a particular detail about what we were talking about. But experientially I don't see any great difference there. Is, is that in line with what you guys are thinking?

45:10 RTH: So would it be okay with everybody if we use these same words [refers to the sample 12.4 green caption], replace this [highlights “Hearing convo with comprehension”] with that [highlights “absorbed (taking it in, not adding anything, not focused on any particular aspect),” which is the green caption from sample 13.5]?

45:20 JBK: Um, to me I understood them as somewhat different, but maybe we could trust the process and see.

45:31 Mel: Well, the only difference is they’re not focused on any particular, taking it in not adding anything. I agree with. “Not focused on any particular aspect” is the only bit that we would all maybe challenge.

45:45 JBK: Could we maybe take that part out of this one since tickets on the website seems. I mean that’s how I understood. Focused on particular aspect. But I guess Russ, you meant it as like

45:58 RTH: Yeah, I would, I would mean, I would mean that I’m not focused on, I’m, I’m not visualizing the website, I’m not [Mel: Oh yeah. No.] paying attention to my sister’s cold hoarse voice and I know she’s had a cold or whatever. That would be particular aspects, but,

46:24 JBK: Okay. Um,

46:28 RTH: So maybe by “particular aspect,” “particular....” I don’t know what the word would be. And also *absorbed*— this, this seems absorbed just seems too strong to me for this. My my impression is in the Liv thing, that, that she, that you were more absorbed. Mel was more absorbed, more locked in.

47:06 JBK: That is my impression too, I’ve gotta say.

47:13 Mel: Yeah.

47:14 JBK: We could, um, I do. Yeah. I also think there were levels of absorption and I guess we’ll see as we go along, but I remember some samples that were very, like some you even were like, I can’t even tell you what the sample was because I was too, after the beep, I was too pulled out of it.

47:38 Mel: Mm-hmm

47:39 JBK: So

47:41 Mel: Why don’t you just put here “in convo with comprehension” and then put “absorbed” with like question marks. This is just something that’s gonna make itself clearer, I think. [RTH types as the green caption to 12.4: “Hearing convo with comprehension (low level of absorbed?)”]

47:50 JBK: Yeah. That, that's kind of what I was saying. Like I feel as we go along and see more samples, like [Mel: Yeah, you're right.] it's gonna be become clear.

47:58 RTH: How does that...

48:02 Mel: Yeah,

48:04 JBK: Clear.

48:06 Mel: It's fine for now.

48:07 JBK: Fine for now. [laughs].

48:09 RTH: And then should we add "hearing convo with comprehension" at the beginning of this phrase? At the beginning of this description on the Liv description [sample 13.5]?

48:26 JBK: The, the question I have there is sometimes in a conversation you couldn't tell us if you were talking or Liv was talking. Do we, do we know in that sample if who's talking? Because sometimes I was just like, I was absorbed in the conversation, but I couldn't tell you who was talking at the moment. Yeah if

48:46 Mel: Yeah. And I guess that's, that's sort of part of my hesitation here. And I've probably, um, contradicted myself a bunch of times, but I think that's part of my hesitation with doing "hearing with comprehension" for that one as opposed to "absorbed." Like now that sort of feels slightly different. Two slightly different things, doesn't it?

49:14 JBK: Yeah.

49:18 RTH: So I lo I sort of lost track of that piece of the conversation trying to get to that other sample. Cuz I should have been able to, why can't I just search for this?

49:30 JBK: Well now it's pasted twice.

49:32 Mel: Yeah. But it's not coming up.

49:35 JBK: Well now you uh, you need to just X out of what you typed in there because you've, you've double pasted some things.

49:46 RTH: I get no matches. So I think I'm searching down, but I can't. Yeah, that's the problem. [opens the Word Find and Replace window] How do I get rid of that?

50:01 Mel: I don't know. I'm not good at this.

50:04 RTH: Oh, there it is.

50:07 Mel: Oh nice. [JBK: Hmm.] Um, no, I was just gonna say that like "absorbed" feels like a nice description of when I'm locked into a conversation and sort of can't recall the content or whatever. And then "hearing with comprehension" sort of feels like, well

that, that's a different level of locked in because I was comprehending the thing at the time so much that I can re, I can tell you what it was I was comprehending. But my hesitation is I don't want the *absorbed* thing to then sound like I'm not listening to a conversation per se of like, I'm sort of sitting there and there's nothing in my brain. Like I am engaged in the conversation. So there isn't a level of comprehension, but less obviously than that one or something.

- 51:02 RTH: So that isn't how I understood com, the *absorbed* thing. The *absorbed* thing wasn't that you didn't understand that you didn't comprehend. [Mel: Yeah.] But that it wasn't just your absorption, it seemed to me, was not *just* about the *content* that was being described. And this and this and this beep was a good example of that. If I think it's so Liv was no doubt telling you, you know, I went to the grocery store yesterday and you were understanding that she went to the grocery store yesterday, but it wasn't about the grocery store and it wasn't about yesterday. That was not what you, what your *absorption* is. Your absorption was in Liv's conveyance to you, [Mel: Yes.] Liv... [Mel: Yes.] Whereas, whereas the, the beep about the tickets, that was, that was about the *tickets*.
- 51:58 Mel: Yes. Yes.
- 52:03 JBK: Mm-hmm.
- 52:03 Mel: I don't know how you describe that difference, but Yes.
- 52:06 JBK: [laughs]. Okay.
- 52:10 RTH: So this is hearing a convo in con this is in a conversation. Maybe we could put that in. [He adds "in conversation" to the green caption of sample 13.5] Maybe
- 52:17 Mel: This feels like we've gone all the way back around to the content, content transcendent stuff.
- 52:24 RTH: Yeah, it is, it's very, it it content. It's the same thing. Without saying content, without trying to sound too erudite about it, then.
- 52:33 Mel: Yeah.
- 52:38 RTH: All right. So now how do we get back to where we were before? What was 12.4? How can there possibly not be any matches at 12.4
- 52:52 JBK: [laughs]?
- 53:00 RTH: How is, how is that possible? [examines Word Find and Replace window]
- 53:02 JBK: My next, um, no,
- 53:06 RTH: I can find it there, but I can't find it here.

53:09 JBK: Maybe Xing out of Word and reopening it, sometimes. Yeah. It's too annoying.

53:17 RTH: We'll do that at the end of day 12. So there was, so we're in agreement. This is hearing conver conversation with comprehension. Yeah. And this is, we're not gonna, we're not gonna write that.

53:30 Mel: Yeah.

53:31 RTH: But then there's also a sensory awareness bodily.

53:35 Mel: Mm-hmm.

53:42 JBK: [inaudible]. [RTH appends "SA bodily (surface)" to green caption for sample 12.4]

53:48 Mel: It's interesting already seeing the number of times sensory awareness has come up. Cuz that's not something that I would've, um, thought was really part of my experience. So that's cool. Cuz it definitely is!

54:03 JBK: Some days I think there was a fair amount.

54:07 RTH: Yeah. That, that will, that will fall outta here. But I, I think it's at the lower end, at the end of the sampling, there was quite a bit of it. Which is pretty typical of sensory awarenesses in general.

54:07 RTH is referring to the fact that DES participants often fail to report sensory awarenesses early in sampling.

54:07 Julian comments: Which means that some early nothing or autopilot samples could have actually been sensory awareness ones? I guess impossible to say in retrospect but it's a possibility. I see now that we talk more about this a few minutes later.

Focusing on sample 12.5

54:27 JBK: [RTH scrolls to sample 12.5] More sensory awareness, bodily uncomfortable

54:33 RTH: And it's in the weight kind of a deal, whatever I call that before. [types "SA bodily (weight, pressing down)" as the green caption for sample 12.5]

54:42 JBK: Do you want to keep track of a discomfort? I think some are more pleasant and some are more uncomfortable? Or is that too much trying to separate good and bad or whatever.

55:03 RTH: That, that's my impression of, of that, was my impression at the time as I recall.

55:09 JBK: I could see that

55:12 RTH: To my

55:14 Mel: Do you do any, Do you do anything with the, this feeling-ness? It's like, you know, there's this description of tranquility, which is clearly a feeling as opposed to just a nothingness.

55:28 JBK: Yeah.

55:36 Mel: But did you, I don't know ever

55:39 JBK: Tranquil nothing.

55:46 RTH: So the question for me in that regard would be: do I, at the moment of this beep, I am feeling my face and nothing else? *Or* is my experience basically nothing, nothing? And when I have to say something, then I have to say, well, I could, I can say I could feel my face, but, and I don't know whether we can tease that apart.

56:24 Mel: Yeah. I'm not sure that we can, given how much time has passed, I don't feel confident chiming in.

56:30 JBK: I was wondering if, because if nothing can be something. Like if, so like part of your experience is you're feeling your face, and I'm wondering if like nothingness is still somehow part of it, that's beyond just being nothing. [inaudible] kind of like a Buddhist way, but it's gonna be hard for me to convey this. But by there not being much in your experience, only this face-pillow feeling and not much else, but still the fact that there's not much. Like later you can call it *tranquil*. I don't think there's a tranquil feeling, but I think that there's something about that. There's relatively not much that let's you later call it tranquil.

57:23 Mel: Yeah, I hear what you're saying of like, um, if I had to think about, you know, is this, uh, experience predominantly that sort of state of being and then there's this percentage of face pressed against a pillow, pillow, you know, and the Buddhist constant nothingness. Like, I sort of agree with you, Julian, like, oh, well that's a thing that you can grab at that I experienced, but what is that in relation to the greater tranquil nothingness that was present? You know, because like I'd not considered that, do you read this and think that this was like a really overwhelmingly strong, you know, face-against-pillow feeling that hardness, whatever. Because I would say that more of my experience is like the nothingness and then this aspect of some sensory awareness, if that distinction makes any sense at all.

58:23 JBK: Yeah. I don't know if we asked for percentages on this, but I think at least in some samples you're like, yeah, like 10% pillow, 90% nothingness. It seems counterintuitive that nothingness could take a percentage, but that's kind of how I understood this, that the nothingness could still like take up something in experience.

58:49 RTH: So in that kind of a situation, I, my impression is generally, but it's not that the nothing takes up experience, it's that what I'm experiencing I experience as being *slight*.

59:01 JBK: [inaudible] [Mel: Hmm.]

- 59:01 RTH: Like I, this, this experience is only 10% as big as my general experiences are, [JBK: Yeah.] and then beyond that, there's nothing. So it's not like I, it's not like I experience 90% nothing. It's that I experienced a very weak something [Mel: Mm-hmm.] [JBK: (inaudible)] And that may very well be *this*, but we didn't do a very good job of writing this description if that's, that's the case. [JBK laughs] And, uh, so I'm a little reluctant to say that that's the way it is.
- 59:28 Mel: No, yeah, I agree with you. I, I think we can't say that's the way it is for this particular thing, but I think this is an interesting discussion in general of trying to establish those distinctions for my experiences.
- 59:42 RTH: Like for example, we, in, in one of the previous beeps in this day, I think, you were lying on the floor and nothing was going on. Mm. And I'm guessing we could have interrogated you and say, well, you didn't feel your backside on the floor or whatever. And you could say, well yeah, I probably did. [Mel: Mm.] But it wasn't much [JBK: Mm-hmm.] And the question is, is this different from that?
- 1:00:07 Mel: I think yes. But, but still exactly. It's a, it's still a low level. Like I'm talking, you know, this been a 30% as opposed to the one laying on back I think was like a Okay. Yeah, there was probably something there and it's 5%.
- 1:00:24 RTH: Right.
- 1:00:26 JBK: Yep.
- 1:00:27 Mel: But in terms of the description, I think you can't do much better than what you've got. [RTH appends "in the direction of nothing???" to the green caption of sample 12.5]
- 1:00:33 JBK: Mm-hmm.
- 1:00:36 Mel: Because I don't think you can do the nothing, Russ, because I think so often the nothing is sort of like, it's the like baseline. So otherwise in every experience you're gonna have to like put "then nothingness" or whatever that state is. Do you know what I mean? Like that's the natural...
- 1:00:58 JBK: But I get this idea of like a slight feeling. Like it's different from your face is pressing into a pillow. It's super smushed, super uncomfortable, you gotta move. Like it's a different experience than that.
- 1:01:13 Mel: Yeah.
- 1:01:16 RTH: [RTH appends "slight?" to sample 12.5 green caption.] How about that?
- 1:01:19 JBK: All good? Yep.

Focusing on sample 12.6

- 1:01:22 RTH: Number 6. [scrolls to sample 12.6]

1:01:24 JBK: Yep. 6. Typing, or writing.

1:01:47 Mel: Is this like an autopilot thing or not?

1:01:50 JBK: It's kind of autopilot-ish.

1:01:54 RTH: I think this part of it is totally autopilot. [Types "autopilot" as a green caption]

1:01:56 Mel: Yeah. That's sort of what I want to,

1:01:59 RTH: And then with a little, with a sensory awareness as well.

1:02:03 JBK: [Mel: Mm-hmm.]. They're both slight there. So the autopilot, because we wrote that the, the autopilot still is maybe more present than the legs.

1:02:28 Mel: Yeah. But exactly in both in that category of

1:02:30 JBK: That both just both just slight things. [RTH appends "SA tactile (temperature) slight" to 12.6 caption.]

1:02:38 Mel: Yeah. Because you know, especially if I compare to, you know, some Kerry samples or whatever in terms of the way she might experience a sensory awareness thing, you know, and it could be quite overwhelming. She's really caught by the dirtiness of her hair in a car mirror or whatever. Whereas I feel a cool breeze on my legs that that's not a hundred percent level experience. That's like a Oh! And there's this little aspect which I get again, I think comes down to this thing that we struggled with a lot throughout the whole thing of being very careful about not just grabbing at things. Because there are certain things like a sensory awareness thing that you can, that I experience in some lower level and it can be described. So like, oh, there's this overwhelming nothingness, but oh, there's also this little thing. Like, that's true. I'm just making sure that then we don't put too much weight on the thing that can be articulated beyond nothingness and autopilot-ness.

1:03:45 JBK: Yeah. I think that was kind of the struggle was seeing as is there really nothing, or maybe there's a slight thing. And in some ways, kind of as you did get better at registering things in experience, like we did catch things like maybe on day 2 we wouldn't have caught the cool breeze. Y'know, that doesn't, that doesn't mean we're making up the cool breeze, y'know, on day two, we might have wondered if we were making it up, but I think, think you did get more careful at being able to tell if something was directly present or not.

1:04:26 RTH: So there are some people, some experiences, where sensory awareness occupies the whole, the whole part of me. Like I feel like my whole attention is wrapped up in noticing the blue color of the screen of my tv, my computer, I'm, I'm drawn to the blue color and that's, that's it. And it feels like a hundred percent of everything, which it. That's not what this is. And I think we can be confident about that.

1:05:01 JBK: Mm-hmm.

1:05:04 RTH: So we happy with this?

1:05:07 JBK: Uh, looks good to me.

1:05:11 Mel: Yep.

Focusing on sample 11.1

1:05:12 RTH: So I'm gonna save this and we're gonna go to day 11. [scrolls to sample 11.1]

1:05:33 JBK: Yeah. Kind of against where we just said this is more present sensory awareness.

1:05:39 Mel: Yeah, true. That's actually like a very apt timing. [laughs]

1:05:43 JBK: [laughs].

1:05:45 RTH: It's, it's amazing to me how often in our, in the DES interviews that that kind of apt timing [JBK: Mm-hmm.] occurs, makes you believe in Jung, you know!

1:05:54 JBK: Collective subconscious.

1:05:23 [Julian comments: Synchronicity is the more apt Jungian reference here.](#)

1:06:06 Mel: Yeah. That's really interesting. Cuz that's such a different sample to so many of them. Like it makes me feel confident that that experience was quite overwhelming or quite present. [JBK: Mm-hmm.] [RTH types as green caption for 11.1: "SA tactile (totally present by comparison)"]

1:06:37 JBK: It is interesting, like when we start doing this, we see some samples and then kind of remember all of experience or a lot of experience like that. And then we get something new and then this kind of like, is making me remember other samples that you described as more overwhelming. So I guess as, as we get into this, like more things are clarified.

1:07:01 Mel: Yeah.

1:07:03 RTH: Onward? [scrolls to 11.2]

Focusing on sample 11.2

1:07:04 JBK: Yeah. Yep.

1:07:12 Mel: [laughs] See dog say; see dog say dog.

1:07:18 JBK: [laughs]

1:07:20 RTH: Autopilot? [Types green caption “autopilot”]

1:07:22 JBK: Autopilot.

1:07:24 Mel: Yep.

1:07:30 JBK: Do you think it makes sense to separate kinds of autopilot or No? No.

1:07:37 Mel: I don’t feel any distinctions I wanna make. What would you try and make? Like speaking

1:07:47 JBK: I don’t know, there’s a lot, actually don’t wanna say what there’s a lot of, but the writing one, there’s a speaking one. There might be doing ones.

1:07:59 Mel: Yeah, okay.

1:08:00 JBK: But yeah, it’s hard to know. Like we might then end up with just different kinds and then what, what does it really tell you?

1:08:11 RTH: I haven’t seen any that makes me want to distinguish anything yet. I might regret that then I’ll have to go back, but

1:08:18 Mel: Yeah.

Focusing on sample 11.3

1:08:19 JBK: But you could always go back if we need to. [RTH scrolls to sample 11.3.]

1:08:22 Mel: Yep. Well this feels like the Liv sample.

1:08:43 RTH: Right. Which we call *absorbed*.

1:08:48 Mel: Yeah.

1:08:48 JBK: Deeply absorbed. Absorbed.

1:08:57 RTH: *Deeply* absorbed or just absorbed?

1:09:07 Mel: I, I feel like I would never make a different distinction between *absorbed* and then oh and then there’s *deeply absorbed*. I feel like if I’m absorbed, I’m deeply absorbed, in terms of, I think that’s what,

1:09:20 JBK: Yeah. I’m not sure about levels to it.

1:09:24 Mel: Yeah.

1:09:25 RTH: So would, do we still think this is different from the tickets conversation?

1:09:30 Mel: I do. Yeah. [RTH: Okay.]

1:09:36 Mel: Because I think this is one of those times where, again, it's coming to the *content transcendent* thing or however we wanna describe that. But like here, I'm definitely locked in, I'm absorbed in the conversation, but there's no particular aspects of the content that's that I'm grabbing at. But that doesn't make me any less absorbed in the conversation at the time.

1:10:00 JBK: So we did say *non particularizing*, uh, or Russ, you said that in our discussions, our routine discussions.

1:10:09 RTH: Back of about Liv, I think

1:10:12 JBK: We didn't, we didn't write it about Liv, but, but you've, uh, you've used that before it as kind of like the best, the most we can say because we don't wanna say *content free*. And that *content transcendent* sounds sorry, maybe to Mel, to like Buddha or whatever [laughs] maybe

1:10:33 Mel: Content transcendent!

1:10:34 JBK: Non particularizing or something.

1:10:37 Mel: God, my dad would roll his eyes at that! He'd be like, "Oh God!" Cuz you remember how I told you he still thinks I make it up, that there's no voice in my head. He'd be like, "Oh! And now you're *content transcendent*! Jesus!" [laughs]

1:10:50 JBK: [laughs]. He doesn't buy the no voice.

1:10:54 Mel: Oh, he thinks I make it up! Although the more this goes on, I think now he believes. [laughs]

1:10:59 JBK: [laughs].

1:11:00 Mel: Um,

1:11:02 RTH: So I said not we, we wrote "not any particular aspect" rather than "non particularizing," but that seems like sort of the same thing.

1:11:09 JBK: Yeah. We could just copy paste that, I guess.

1:11:14 Mel: Yeah. It feels like exactly the same [laughs] as that sample to me.

1:11:28 RTH: So this is not like, not like

1:11:31 Mel: That one. That one's different. I think if we're gonna split hairs with it. Cuz there's an aspect of the content that has stood out. [RTH copies "[In conversation] absorbed (taking it in, not adding anything, not focused on any particular aspect)" as the green caption for sample 11.3.]

1:11:43 JBK: I think it's interesting that the, the beeps were, was really hard for you or that you didn't remember or didn't even know how to begin to talk about it, um, like seemed even like so deeply absorbed, like even more than some other samples. [Mel: Mm-hmm.] So I wonder if that's the case here, because this one you didn't even know how to begin to talk.

1:12:12 Mel: Yeah.

1:12:14 JBK: So that's like, I'm not sold on saying if something's deeply absorbed or not.

1:12:18 Mel: Yeah.

1:12:19 JBK: But in terms of evidence, like that's something I wonder.

1:12:23 Mel: Yeah, I agree with that.

1:12:26 RTH: Onward? [Scrolls to sample 11.5]

Focusing on sample 11.5 (passing over sample 11.4 which had been skipped)

1:12:28 JBK: Yeah. Deeply, *totally* absorbed.

1:12:43 Mel: [laughs]

1:12:44 JBK: [laughs] [RTH copies " [In conversation] absorbed (taking it in, not adding anything, not focused on any particular aspect)" as the green caption for sample 11.3, and then changes "In conversation" to read "Editing conversation."]

1:13:14 RTH: Is that right?

1:13:17 JBK: Looks

1:13:17 Mel: Right. Yeah. Is there something that, the thing that I'm just like mulling over right now is that, um, whether there's a common thing here about the conversation bit that you've put picked up there, Russ, about receiving, um, what that person is transmitting. That's like, do you know what I mean? like, the bit that I'm like deeply absorbed in here is the profoundness of this words coming outta my grandpa's mouth in terms of meaning, in terms of feeling, in terms of receiving-ness.

1:13:55 JBK: [Mel: Mm-hmm.].

1:13:56 Mel: That's, I'm just like, I don't know if there's distinctions to be made or whatever, but when we say absorbed in, like, you know, I'm editing the video, but that aspect is sort of autopilot-y. I'm, and a fact of the matter. And like, obviously this is a video, a video, so there's visual aspects to it and stuff, but I'm ab I'm absorbed in receiving the meaning and the feeling and the whatever of what's being transmitted. I just think that, that's interesting. There's something about that.

1:14:27 RTH: So what we're doing with that ra, that raises the question of something like: [types in green "<<<Is absorption about receiving conversation??>>>", and we might find as we go other examples that will shed light on that. [Mel: Umm.] For example, if we find absorption in, you know, physical characteristics or something later as we, we'll go through, maybe we'll answer that.

1:15:07 Mel: Yep. Yeah, that's a nice note. I think you're touching on what I'm getting at. Exactly.

1:15:13 JBK: You wanna

1:15:13 Mel: Add because it feels like it's a thing that happens when I'm trying to receive meaning or receive the, you know, cuz it's even making me think a little bit about that reading and then the feeling of empathy. Like it's sort of related, but not... [RTH appends "Seems it's about verbal comprehension>>> to the 11.5 green caption.]

1:15:31 JBK: Yeah, it makes I see what you're saying and like being similar to receiving samples and then it Yeah, it makes me think like if distinctions we make, I mean like we're making some distinctions to talk about things, but in a lot, in a lot of ways these might be arbitrary. Like in other samples you're also kind of absorbing, receiving whatever. And then like we somehow separated this from reading and receiving samples. What is it necessarily so different? And I could see...

1:16:10 RTH: This. Well, I agree that that's possible, which is why I think I, this is best as a question here. [highlights the "Is absorption about receiving conversation?"] [Mel: Mm-hmm.]. We're not *saying* that absorption comes from conversation only. We're *wondering* whether conversation absorption is part of a conversation receiving deal.

1:16:27 JBK: Yeah.

1:16:28 RTH: [Mel: Mm-hmm.]. And the subsequent samples may answer that, or maybe may not.

1:16:33 Mel: Yeah, I like that.

1:16:35 RTH: Does that do it for you, Julian? The emphasis that this is a question rather than an answer?

1:16:41 JBK: Yeah. Okay. I'm still wondering about what, especially here about distinguishing levels of, of absorption, because we actually said that this was more absorbed [laughs]. Yeah. Sample 11.3, which,

1:16:59 RTH: So 11.3 was...

1:17:02 Mel: Just conversation. [JBK: This one.] Just that, but I, in the way that I do, um, draw conclusions, I argue that that deep feeling of absorption that I'm feeling here is directly linked to the content that I'm absorbed in. I am compelled by what I am receiving from my grandfather because it is re, particularly compelling and profound. And so I am absorbed in that in a way that I am absorbed in whatever conversation

I'm having with my brother, my sister and my father or whatever. But it's not evidently some profound thing that's making me feel. It's just a conversation. I think that that is genuinely linked to that levels bit.

1:17:51 JBK: Yeah. Like the tickets were just the tickets, but your grandfather talking is like

1:17:59 Mel: Yeah. And the reading making me feel a really certain way. You know, I'm, I'm absorbed and I'm comprehending and, and so it's, it's a bit all consuming. I think that's related, but I think this, there's a question to keep an eye on.

1:18:19 JBK: Could we maybe put deeply with some question mark now that, not that I'm questioning that it's deep. I do think you're deeply absorbed, but just if separating deep absorption is something you want to do, I'm still not sure about?

1:18:51 RTH: [RTH types "<<<Do we think there are levels of deep absorption?>>>" into sample 11.5 green caption.] Like that?

1:18:52 JBK: Yeah. I'm, I'm fine with that. Just in some brackets. Yeah.

1:18:54 Mel: Yep.

1:18:54 Russ comments: Remember that the green meeting should actually be understood as a preparation for the rectification meeting, which will come later. The green meeting will eventually create a potential characteristic that is aimed at the depth of absorption. That will then be evaluated by the rectification process.

1:19:00 JBK: Move on, onward. Yeah. [Mel: Mm-hmm.].

1:19:04 RTH: That's day 11.

1:19:07 JBK: Okay. Zipping along.

1:19:10 RTH: Do we have time and energy to keep going?

1:19:13 JBK: Yeah.

1:19:13 Russ comments: The green meeting proceeds for another half hour, which, because transcription is hard work, we do not transcribe. The audio / video is available at <https://youtu.be/Z1SfWIrODvI>.