

Mel May
Mel Rectification Meeting

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the March 17 interview with Mel that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/1Svf0y2DCSM>. 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

- 0:00 RTH: So our task today is to look at the rectification of Mel. And I sent you all, uh [Mel: Mm-hmm.] The rectification spreadsheet, but I should put it on my screen I think, uh, if I can. So can you now see the rectification spreadsheet? [JBK: Mm-hmm.] And then we've got the green [Mel: Yep.] and purple document. This I think is the most recent green and purple document that we can refer to when we need to.
- 0:40 [inspects the rectification spreadsheet] And there's obviously one column where we have a lot of disagreements [circles column K with the cursor], mostly because I haven't rated it, apparently. Cuz there's a lot of zeros in this column. [JBK: Oh, okay. (laughs)] and, uh, and we'll have to, we'll have to figure out what that gets, where that gets us into. But the first one of those is the only one on the first sample.
- 1:01 So there's, there's actually considerable amount of disagreement almost all, almost all the time. Like he, like here [circles column K in sample 2.6], for example, I say 0. I think Julian is second, second string here. So Julian says .5 and Mel says 1. So we're all over the place in a lot of this column. So I'm guessing.
- 1:01 Russ comments: Here is an explanation of the rectification algorithm displayed in the rectification spreadsheet. For example, the contents of the cell in column K for sample 2.6 is "9000500." The leading "9" is a code that indicates *there is a disagreement somewhere among the raters of this cell*. The remaining six digits are divided into pairs: the first pair ("00") says that the first rater (Russ) rated sample 2.6's *Absorption* as 0; the second pair ("05") says that the second rater (Julian) rated sample 2.6's *Absorption* as 0.5; the third pair ("00") says that the third rater (Mel) rated sample 2.6's *Absorption* as 0. (For sample 4.2, Row K is "9001010", which means that Russ rated *Absorption* as 0, whereas Julian and Mel rated *Absorption* as 1.0.)
- If a cell displays "1," all raters rated the characteristic as a 1 for that sample. If the cell is blank, all raters rated the characteristic as a 0 for that sample.
- 1:20 JBK: Yeah, I was really wondering about this column.

- 1:23 RTH: I'm guessing this is the, the phenomenon that we're gonna have to sort through as we go. And the rest of them are mistakes or slight, slight, slighter disagreements or whatever. [Mel: Mm-hmm.] So shall we look at this number here? [circles column *K* for the first sample] Which is me saying *no*, Julian saying *maybe* and Mel saying *no* to "high intensity level, high concentration, high absorption" [that is the label of column *K*].
- 2:02 Mel: Well, I would like to speak holistically or discuss holistically that whole issue, I think. yeah, this is sort of the tricky part. I thought for me, Julian, is that what you, is that your trickiness? [they had corresponded about this process by email, and both found it tricky] Like I found (a) that I was putting a 1 in not figure-izing like basically all the time, which felt like, *is this helpful?* if that's all the time—or maybe it is. And then with absorption, I sort of lent the way of like, um, well if I'm like, not figure-izing was always present when absorption was there for me, like that's sort of the definition I was doing, but I didn't really like any of it.
- 2:53 RTH: So that comment, I would say, is the heart of why the rectification meeting is important. Because I think, I think we at one time *thought* that this was something that we ought to rate, but now we're discovering in the *act* of it that maybe that wasn't the right thing or what was problematic or tricky or whatever. And we gotta figure out what to do about it.
- 3:14 JBK: Yeah. Because in the green meeting, or no, it was maybe the post green pre rectification meeting, uh, you were saying that level of absorption didn't so much make sense to you. And even if it was a conversation you were in or just a email, it was more passive. It still felt.... Cuz you were saying the difference was that the thing itself was just more interesting, but that the experience of it wasn't maybe so different. So I thought of that when I was doing the ratings. I was like, should I honor more *that* interpretation, or more the original descriptions (where there we did kind of talk about different levels of absorption)? So yeah, that's what I was, that's what made it tricky for me.
- 3:14 Russ comments: RE "should I honor more *that* interpretation or more the original descriptions (where there we did kind of talk about different levels of absorption)?"
Should I honor the earlier or the later understanding is a general issue in DES, and my answer is that I should always honor what I take to be the *better* understanding. That means I should take into consideration the advantages of the early versions—they were closer to the original samples. I should also take into consideration the advantages of the later versions—they had the iterative-training advantages. I should beware of the risks of both: the earlier for primacy effects and the later for recency effects, etc. In short, at every step of the way, the object is to do the best that I can do.
The DES process tries to capitalize on all the advantages and recognize all the disadvantages. Recognizing the earlier advantages, for example, it requires immediate-ish writing of "contemporaneous" descriptions of each sample—while their idiosyncrasies are still fresh. Recognizing the later advantages, for example, it requires a green meeting at the end of sampling, taking all samples into consideration,

Recognizing both the earlier and later advantages, it requires a rectification meeting, which takes us back to the beginning of sampling as well as the middle and end.

Those are all tools that are designed to aim toward fidelity. They are not (as we are not) perfect—they are thoughtful, principled guides toward fidelity.

4:13 Mel: Yeah. And then I sort of felt like, I don't know, I didn't really trust my answer each time here. Like I was doing the same sort of thing, Julian like, *oh well this is one of those samples where we all definitely agreed that this was a great level of absorption or whatever*. I don't know, just each time though, I was having to prescribe a number or say yes it was bad or not that it just felt like I wasn't, I wasn't confident in it or confident's not the right word, but, y'know, I just didn't.

4:13 Russ comments: That kind of uneasy feeling is exactly what the rectification meeting is designed to acknowledge and capitalize on. It's one thing to think, as from the armchair, that we understand a phenomenon. It's quite another thing to apply that understanding to individual sample after individual sample after individual sample. That's where the rubber meets the road, and there is less room for abstraction.

4:46 RTH: Well I must not have liked it either because it looks like I never rated it. Nope. There's one, I rated it one time. That's

5:00 JBK: [Mel: Mm-hmm.]

5:00 Mel: So look, there's disagreements about everything on here.

5:04 JBK: And we all had different standards too, I think to count something as absorbed. Maybe my bar was lower, like some of the *Saltburn*. I think all of the *Saltburn*, like a lot of the conversation I put that as absorbed. Maybe Russ, you were holding out for like, some of the deeply locked-in stuff, but yeah.

Julian comments: I treated the absorption column kind of like the continuum for nothing <--> deep absorption that I proposed in the green meeting and rectification meeting. It's basically a 3-point continuum: 0 is nothing; .5 is autopilot or a bit of something; 1 is absorption to deep absorption. This was probably me stubbornly holding out to certain proclivities. No one else treated the absorption column like this. They're thinking was more like—is Mel absorbed here or not. So that made the ratings not line up. This disagreement isn't necessarily a bad thing, as we'll talk about.

5:27 RTH: So Mel, when you said just a second ago that there's a lot of disagreements, were you talking about in this column? Or were you talking about sort of overall?

5:34 Mel: Everywhere. The whole thing.

5:36 RTH: So, so I would say this is, this is not an unusual number of disagreements in a rectification spreadsheet. May, maybe it's slightly more, [Mel: Okay.] I'm guessing that if you took out this column, it would probably be about the same number of disagreements as I'm accustomed to seeing.

- 6:01 Mel: Okay. Okay. I mean, yeah, we can go through one by one, but I just found, I just felt like it was very hard to categorize these things. Like to assign, uh, yes, there was absorption or not, or like on most things I was like, this just feels like putting a square into a round hole.
- 6:25 RTH: Well it, it seems to me like absorption is in a category of its own in the terms of the number of disagreements.
- 6:35 JBK: Yeah. I think for sensory awareness, I might have forgot about all the subcategories, bodily and, and weight.
- 6:43 RTH: Right. That, that's what I'm guessing is gonna, uh, gonna be the case for some, uh, some number of the others.
- 6:43 Russ comments: That kind of rater unreliability issue is frequent in DES rectification, because (a) there is a lot to rate and (b) there are other issues that are more important, so JBK should not worry about this. The independent-rater procedure will make those mistakes easy to spot and correct.
- 6:51 RTH: (continues) So it seems to me that we, we have sort of two choices. We can try to figure out what to do about absorption (or maybe three choices). We can, we can encounter 'em as we go: so we'll talk about it in terms of this sample and then we'll talk about it in terms of this sample. And maybe we'll figure it out as we go. Or we could wait until the end and do them all at the end. Or we could try to figure it out at the beginning. And I guess, I guess what I think is that we ought do it as we go. [coughs] Excuse me. And maybe it'll, maybe it'll come clear. [Mel: Yeah.] Or maybe we'll just throw up our hands [JBK: Mm-hmm.] and then [Mel: Yeah.]
- 7:34 But I, but I think that is the, that is the *virtue* as well as the *difficulty* of the rectification meeting, because we agreed at some point that there was a, something here that we were interested in. But then when it came actually to applying the rubber to the road, [Mel: Mm-hmm.] then we had trouble, we had trouble with that. Or, or at least I had trouble with it. [Mel: Mm-hmm.] You all have more agreement than I, but even you didn't agree. So shall we look at absorption, which is the only disagreement in beep number 2.1? [Scrolls to the purple text for sample 2.1.]

Focusing on sample 2.1

- 8:13 JBK: Yeah. Okay. So my bar was pretty much everything above a nothing I put as a .5. Or everything [laughs]. Yeah. So the zero I reserved for very dormant or nothing-y things and a.5 for something present. But, um, I agree that's, it's not especially, maybe not especially focused.
- 9:08 RTH: To me, there's just, there's nothing that is that the remotely high intensity level, high concentration, high absorption level, which is what we, the *terms* that we were trying to apply to this. I'm not saying that I'm *right* about that. I'm just saying I can't see it.
- 9:29 JBK: But for me, .5 wasn't that it's a maybe for high intensity, but that it's,

9:37 RTH: And what part, what part of this even would be *maybe*?

9:39 JBK: In the middle? I'm, I'm saying there is no, maybe I'm saying .5 for me, I just put like as in between. But um, yeah, if that's a misuse of the scale, then we, I'm <inaudible>

9:57 Mel: Well I, I think I was applying *not figure-izing* for those sorts of examples. So *not figure-izing* was when I was con, I was interpreting that as when I've got the blinkers on and I'm not getting, um, yep. There's no specifics. And I'm also sort of like this with the thing, y'know, so that's not *nothing* when there's that category present, there's an element of some sort of locked-in because I'm on the thing, but that's not absorbed from...

10:27 JBK: I'm happy to, to just...

10:29 Mel: ...where I'm standing.

10:30 JBK: ...take away my .5 here.

10:35 RTH: Okay. So then the next place we have issues is this one here, which is 2.5. [scrolls purple to sample 2.5]

Focusing on sample 2.5

10:35 Russ comments: They discover that the spreadsheet has a problem—some of the rows are off kilter, causing the comparison algorithm to work incorrectly. It takes Russ a few minutes to debug this—some of those minutes we delete from the recording, some are set here in gray. The reader may jump ahead to 14:54 without loss of continuity.

11:02 Mel: I have no idea why I've got, is that the right one?!

11:04 JBK: Really? There's nothing [laughs]

11:07 RTH: 2.5. Yeah.

11:14 Mel: Oh, that's ridiculous. That's a zero.

11:19 JBK: Yeah. No, I don't know why we both made that mistake.

11:28 RTH: And then 2., well maybe I should go and make sure that that's, that I haven't screwed up something in the,

11:38 JBK: Lemme get my sheet.

11:41 RTH: So this is my sheet.

11:44 JBK: I know for in my sheet I put zero for that

11:47 RTH: Julian's sheet he put zero. So maybe there is something screwed up in the spreadsheet. And Mel put zero. So there *is* something screwed up in the spreadsheet. I wonder why that is. I did have quite a bit of trouble with the spreadsheet and I don't know why it was. I don't...

12:13 RTH: No I don't,

12:15 Mel: Did I break it?

12:15 RTH: So let's see whether we can find, it starts always mark sample that has a distinct pattern to it. Like maybe here. This would be 7.1 is words present in Mel. 7.1 is a half words present and 7.1 for Russ is, is also. So that seems to be lined up right. And so 7.1... There's the problem. So the, so this, this should all be 34. So all these numbers are wrong.

13:18 JBK: Hmm.

13:18 RTH: So the question is why, how did this happen? So this is 29, this should, this should all be 29 and it's all 30. So we're all off by a row here. So let me see how to rectify that. This is 9, I want it to be 8. That looks like 8 and it *still* looks like 8. So we're gonna do this again. Huh?

14:03 JBK: You need to press *Enter* or something like that?

14:05 RTH: I don't think so.

14:23 RTH: All right! Let's see whether that did it!?!

14:31 JBK: 2.5 is fixed.

14:36 RTH: So this is now comparing row 7, which is correct. But we decided that that should be a nothing. And this is now comparing row 8 and that's correct. Yeah.

14:49 JBK: I see. Yeah. Cuz I see on my sheet I had a 0.5 for there too.

14:53 Mel: Yeah, I think it's fine now.

14:54 RTH: Right, so now this should be a nothing day two, I guess we have to look at that.

15:05 JBK: It was the same issue where I used 0.5 as things that were a nothing but before full absorption.

Focusing on sample 2.6

15:11 RTH: And now we're gonna go to 2.6. 2.6.

15:19 RTH: Sorry about that.

- 15:22 JBK: We found a solution!
- 15:24 RTH: 2.6.
- 15:32 JBK: Hmm. I think this is a thing where we originally described as *nothing*, but I was wondering if we badly described it, and that if it had come on later days....
- 15:58 Mel: Yeah, I put this as *absorbed*. I was going 1 or 0 on mine. So this is probably, I'd be happy with the .5. But this is where I was just getting trick-ness of um, I find the distinctions really hard to identify a lot. Like what is to say that that is more absorbed than me looking at pictures of a Steadicam online as previously? [JBK: Yeah.] It's just that there's somebody else involved. So it seems more like locked in. And to the point where like the content is just whatever., so it's not piquing my interest in some crazy way. So we're not counting it as I fully absorbed, like I just find the whole thing so problematic.
- 17:00 RTH: So there's certainly nothing about this that seems like it's a high intensity level, high concentration, high absorption level. I could see that, that there was a some intensity, but even that, it's hard for me to get my head around.
- 17:25 JBK: Yeah,
- 17:30 Mel: Yeah. I'm okay with that. I, I give this a [JBK: I'm fine with that too.] to the point of 0.

Focusing on sample 3.1

- 17:35 RTH: Well, let's see what happens if we do that. Then in the next beep, which is gonna be 3.1. [Mel: Yeah.] we're gonna have the same intensity issue except now only Julian says it's a half. That might be his half thing. And then we have unsymbolized thinking where Mel and I say Yes and that Julian must have missed.
- 18:01 JBK: Yeah, I think it is unsymbolized thinking.
- 18:07 RTH: So that's a one. And then
- 18:12 JBK: I think I put it in the wrong column. [laughs]. Yeah, I put it in the one below. You can also take it out.
- 18:20 RTH: I can take it out here.
- 18:22 JBK: Yeah. So it was another thing where I put .5 because I thought it was midway absorbed. Like, but yeah, I don't, it's not that I think it's super highly absorbed. We can take that out. [RTH: Okay.]
- 18:54 I still think, yeah, I still think there's something to what you're saying, Mel, like if it doesn't feel right to you to rate different absorption levels and different intensities. Cuz that's another thing I feel like *intensity* might be the wrong word, because maybe you being absorbed or locked in like isn't so intense. I feel like normally when I think

of absorption, it's active and intense and you're in it, but for you it seems it can be kind of chill [laughs]. I don't know.

19:27 RTH: Well we, we might get to those here.

19:31 JBK: Yeah.

19:33 RTH: This, these two might be, might be Julian's more sensitive than the others. So let's see about that. This is gonna be 3.5. 3.5.

Focusing on sample 3.5

20:01 JBK: Yeah. Um, it was again, me just using that column as a more than nothing kind of thing.

20:20 RTH: All right, we'll scratch that for the moment,

20:22 JBK: Take it out.

Focusing on sample 4.1

20:23 RTH: And we'll go to 4.1.

20:32 JBK: Yeah, same thing there.

20:37 RTH: So we're happy to take this one out.

20:39 JBK: Yep.

20:40 RTH: And then we get to four point three, four and five where you all agreed that there was something going on in this arena.

20:58 Mel: Yeah. But now I sort of disagree with myself. Cuz I just don't think that that's, I actually any different experientially to the other things. It just feels harder to accept because it's such an active thing. You're in a conversation with someone else. You simply must be locked in it a more intense rate. But I actually think to your point, Julian, it remains quite passive and doesn't seem any different to the other examples ahead, it just feels harder to...

21:34 JBK: When you say, when you say "not any different," do you mean [Mel: ...I think.] that y'know, the same general kind of thing, but of course there are some differences because it's like just a conversation as opposed to this? Or do you actually mean like *not any different*?

22:06 Mel: Um, I'm not sure how to answer that. I just think... So the thing that was, that I was confident in being able to identify in all these things is the *not*. So we can all agree on these things I'm *not*, um, particularizing, I'm *not* editorializing, I'm *not* distracted by other things. I'm not like this is happening, which we all are agreeing on all that time. I

think absorption is such, I, I just, I can't do the same thing because it just feels like, I don't know, it just doesn't feel, I not accurate, but like, gosh, it feels impossible. I don't know.

22:59 RTH: It seems to me that if we are, if we're, if we're we are in agreement, it seems that we're, that Mel is *not* doing anything *else*. Milly's talking, Mel's taking it in, and she's *not* doing anything else. I, I think actually what you said a little bit ago, it's hard to imagine doing something else when you're in a conversation. *Almost* everybody does something else when they're in a conversation! [JBK laughs] Well, I shouldn't say almost everybody, but *a lot of times* people do something else. They're thinking about what they're gonna say; they're imagining, they're, Milly is talking about the having dinner at a restaurant and, and they're imagining the restaurant scene. People are doing all kinds of crap when uh, when other people are talking. And I'm not, this is not disparaging by any means. It is a way that people have of engaging in conversation.

23:50 Your way, which is fairly unusual of engaging in conversation, is to take it in and, and nothing else. That's the exception more than the rule, I would say. That it's, may I, I might have made it seem a little bit more extreme than I actually think it is. But the, but in in that, I, I think there is a, there are a lot in, in regular people, non-Mel people. There are a lot of times when people say I was in, I was, I was engaged in conversation and that's all that's fairly common, which is what I take you to be saying here. Now the, the question is whether there's something that's exceptionally absorption absorbing about that, which I have a hard time seeing that there is.

24:42 Mel: Yeah. Which is what I now sort of think that like the act of that is no different to the act of me being locked into any of the other things. It's just that at that time I'm in a conversation as opposed to being not editorializing about shuffling through my mail. Like in this, I don't, I don't actually think it's any more active, even though that feels sort of like an oxymoron because you are like by definition, a more active participant in the thing that's happening on you are engaged in a conversation. But like up here, I don't think it's any different.

25:25 RTH: So in the green meeting, we said *carried-along-by* equals *absorbed* in conversation. And so we, we could have said *Mel was carried along by the conversation* or we could have said *Mel was absorbed by the conversation*. That's how I understand this green. Does everybody agree with that? [Mel: Hmm. [lost in cross-talk] Yeah but now I'm sort of going against it] [JBK: [lost in cross-talk] I feel like carried along by...] Well now, so that if, if that is the case, then the question is: does *carried along by* deserve to be called *concentrated high absorption*.

26:08 So what maybe what we should do is we should [Mel: I don't think so. No.] is, because Julian doesn't seem like he's on board here, we should leave this, leave this the way it is and, and, and go on and talk about some more. And then we'll either come back and we'll just wholesale-change these all to 1s or change them all to blanks or do whatever it is that we feel like we have to do after we figured it out. Does that seem like a plan? You happy with that Julian?

26:08 Russ comments: This suggestion is in line with the general DES iterative philosophy: we have stated an issue, and rather than resolve it immediately, let's let what we have said about it percolate along as we consider other samples. From those new

perspectives, we will perhaps become clearer about the issues that we are worrying here.

26:45 JBK: Yeah, I'm still mind melded. Like, cuz you're comparing these to like the shuffling the mail and, and like stuff like that. Like there could be stuff that was really, it seemed like barely, barely anything. So are you saying that that these conversation things are like, are kind of barely anything but still, but it's not fair to call them nothing, but it's hard to pull apart, apart any one thing? Or...

27:28 Mel: Yeah, I think so. Um, and I'm well aware I'm like contradicting myself here. This is all live reaction. But, but I think that I, yeah, found it easier to do the non-figure-izing, cuz *absorbed*, like exactly high intensity level, high concentration, high absorbed, [JBK: Mm-hmm.] I actually don't, that's suggesting that it's really active at some point. Or, and I know we agreed on this at the green meeting, but now that I'm putting things into action, I'm finding it hard of like, I don't think there actually is a huge distinction between me being carried along by conversation and me doing something that was a more passive activity. It's still like this degree of nothingness, this autopilot-y, y'know, like whatever, making a cup of tea, not thinking about anything. It's just doing the thing. This is the same thing, but I'm just doing the conversation. There's no more active component. I think it's just being way harder [JBK: Yeah.] to grapple with because that seems hard. You simply *must* be more, there *must* be something more active in the art of the conversation. But now that I'm having to compare them and decide whether one is more absorbed than another and stuff, I'm just actually not sure that it is.

27:28 Russ comments: RE "I know we agreed on this at the green meeting, but now that I'm putting things into action, I'm finding it hard."

That is, as Russ will say in the first part of the upcoming turn, the heart of the rectification process (see the comment at 4:13). The green meeting is the consideration of impressions that *seem* to apply across a set of samples. The rectification meeting is that rubber-meets-the-road *application* of that impression against the actual concrete of specific moments of experience. That series of rubber-impression-meets-concrete-specific-sample impacts is designed to abrade away the rubber—to polish / edit / redefine / scrap our green-meeting impressions into conceptions that actually apply to the samples. That process is underway here.

28:52 RTH: Well what I, what I would say about that two things, I have two things to say. One is this is exactly why I think the rectification meeting is important; and the other is, and, and the *this* there being, we can change our mind from what, what seemed like a good idea to, before we had to apply it to what seems like a good idea after we have to apply it. But that's what the rectification meeting is for.

28:52 Russ comments: This is in-general restatement of the philosophy of the rectification meeting. See the comment at 27:28.

29:15 RTH: (continues) And the other thing that I would say is: I think it's risky to try to compare a sample to a, a *set* of other samples. Like I think we, we, we've been saying things like, *well this is different from the sorting the mail and the mail deal*. I think it would

be better for us to *not do that* and wait until we get to the sorting of the mail deal and see whether that's different from the ones that we've already talked about. Rather than, rather than have a, a generalized deal where Julian may, Julian's general impression set of samples that he fit fits into that sample might be different from Mel's set of samples that she would be comparing to, and different from mine.

29:15 Russ comments: RE (JBK 26:45) "cuz you're comparing these to like the shuffling the mail and, and like stuff like that"

Here is a general principle of DES: To know what we are talking about, we need to be aimed at specific concrete instances. As soon as we venture into the realm of faux generality, then all is lost.

A *true* generality is the result of considering an explicitly defined set of instances, applying an explicit rule to them, and then stating a general result.

A *faux* generality is the making of a statement that *sounds like* a true generality but is based (at best) on an impressionistic set of instances and/or applies an impressionist rule. JBK's 26:45 is a faux generality because the *stuff like that* in "shuffling the mail... *and like stuff like that*" is an impressionistic set of instances: what JBK includes in the *stuff like that* category is not well defined or understood (even by JBK!).

A fundamental aim of DES is to eschew faux generalities, because in the realm of faux generalities, nobody knows what anybody is talking about, including the talker.

The rectification meeting can be said to be the process of transforming the potentially faux generalities created in the green meeting into actual generalities.

29:58 JBK: Okay.

30:00 RTH: So I would, so that's why, that's why I'm saying why I'm, I'm happy to leave this [he is referring to the cells in column *K* that have the 9-codes (e.g., 9000510)] the way it is for now because that'll remind us, oh, we gotta come back and do something about this. And uh, and then when we get to the sorting-the-mail thing, then we will then, we'll maybe, maybe *then* we will be able to figure out what to do about it.

30:20 JBK: Yeah. We can press on. I'm kind of thinking, Yeah, now I'm really having doubts about this category, too. Especially you Mel, just saying it just doesn't feel comfortable or Right. So I'm wondering, y'know, [laughs], should we ditch it all together? But yeah, we could, we could try to just keep going and see what, what else comes up as we do more specific, like deal with actual samples.

30:20 Russ comments: Metaphorically speaking, the rectification process is a rock tumbler: you put a lot of dull rocks in a tumbler and turn it on; as the rocks fall against each other, again and again, they abrade away the protruding parts and leave a polished, shiny surface.

The problem with faux generalizations (see the comment at 29:15) is that they are essentially soft, soft to the core. You can tumble a batch of faux generalities (think of a bunch of Nerf balls) over and over and over, and nothing will ever be abraded.

30:48 RTH: Hmm. So

30:53 Mel: Yeah, I sort of think that not the, the, the category to the left of it [Excel column *J*, headed “Not singling out, Not Editorializing, Not creating anything extra, Not particularizing, Not figure-izing, Not Mel-izing.”] has become a more helpful evolution of what we have been calling *absorption*. Y’know, it’s like the category to the left is us working out well what does that mean? When she’s absorbed, she’s not editorializing, she’s not singularising, she’s not... I, I feel like that category has now *become* a better definition, in a way, of *absorption* because trying to do the inverse of the not figure-izing just seems so impossible to apply.

30:53 Russ comments: Mel, here, beautifully describes in this specific situation the general rock-tumbling (see comment at 30:20) of the rectification process. In Mel’s specific *green* meeting, we created (among others) the two columns *J* and *K*. In Mel’s specific *rectification* meeting (here), we are finding that the concepts sketched in column *K* are better applied as amplifications of the column-*J* concept.

31:30 RTH: That’s the way it seems to me, that we, that for the absorption to be a category [gestures to column *K*], it has to be something that goes beyond this [gestures to column *J*]. And so far I’m not convinced that it does, except *maybe* in the one sample that I rated, which I think is the grandfather sample [Mel: If any.] where there seemed to be, there *did* seem to be there to be more absorption [he refers to sample 11.5]. But we can talk about that when we get there. [JBK: Yep.] So 4.4.

Focusing on sample 4.4

31:59 Mel: Yep.

32:02 RTH: Seems like the same thing.

32:04 JBK: Mm-hmm.

Focusing on sample 4.5

32:05 RTH: And 4.5 seems like the same thing. [JBK: Yeah.] So whatever we decide for these, they’re all gonna be the same.

32:14 JBK: Yeah.

Focusing on sample 5.1

32:17 RTH: And that takes us to 5.1. And 5.1 differs because Julian (he’s number two here [see the explanatory comment at 1:01]) Julian only gave this a half a one in the not-figurizing

32:34 JBK: Not figurizing. Yeah. It’s, I mean it’s about the tote bag. I wasn’t sure if that was just because you happen to remember and report on it, whereas some other samples you didn’t. So if it’s just like a difference in reporting or if it’s actually difference in experience that this was more about the tote bag.

- 32:58 RTH: So I'm not understanding that. Say that again.
- 33:01 JBK: Well, it seemed like this one Mel is more particularizing. It's more about the tote bag, but I wasn't sure if that's a difference in experience or just reporting, because Mel happened to write down that at this time it was a tote bag, but really the experience is pretty similar. You're just kind of taking in whatever's in front of you and it happens to be a tote bag at the time. So I wasn't sure.
- 33:34 RTH: It seems like the same.
- 33:40 JBK: You think. Mel, do you think seems like the same?
- 33:50 Mel: I do, but I considered what you're saying Julian. [JBK: Mm-hmm.] Like I remember I thought, *oh wait, is this more particularizing?* I think for the same thing, for the same reason that, oh, we have a more specific [JBK: Mm-hmm.] um, yeah, thing here. But I agree. I think I decided that's more to do with my reporting than whether the experience was more particularized. But...
- 34:18 RTH: So the difference here, it seems, maybe, but tell me whether this is right, is that in the previous beeps, Molly or whoever was doing the conversation, and so Mel was passively or not particularizedly grasping what *Molly* was saying. But now in 5.1, Mel is *producing* the picture and stopping, I guess, pausing to look at it in an admiring kind of a way. [JBK: Hmm. So the question is, once the picture has pre, been presented, then is she having a conversation as if she were having a conversation with the picture? So I'm, I would be, I would be happy to go with .5 here. I can see how that is sometimes somewhat different, but depending on what "admiring" is.
- 35:27 JBK: Yeah. What I'm wondering is if the Milly and the conversation, if it's, y'know, partially what Milly is saying, partially just her vibe and her presence or just not just not any one thing, just the, just the conversation. And here it's kind of singled in on that tote bag, that being a nice tote bag. So like a little bit more particularized.
- 36:02 Mel: [Lost in cross-talk] Yeah I'm okay with a .5, I think.
- 36:02 RTH: What I would, what I would, I'm happy with 0.5 and what, what I would say is *it doesn't matter much* because we're gonna end up with out of 65 samples or whatever, however many samples there are 62 [that's a guess; it turns out to be 43] of them or y'know, a very big number is gonna be this non singularizing. And, and there's gonna be a couple where that would be hard for us to decide. But it isn't gonna change the conclusion. The conclusion is there's a shitload of this stuff.
- 36:02 Russ comments: The issue at stake here is the distinction between fidelity and validity. Fidelity asks whether it apt to say that Mel often does not figurize or singularize her experience. Validity asks whether Mel's experience is the same or different from others'. Fidelity is about forming words that rest lightly on phenomena. Validity is about counting pre-defined categories. That is a big difference.
- 36:34 JBK: [laughs].

- 36:35 Mel: Yeah, that's true.
- 36:38 RTH: Yeah. And then about this same sample, we have to determine the high level of absorption.
- 36:54 Mel: Yeah. I just hate the whole category now! So [laughs]
- 36:56 JBK: [laughs] By the new definition we came up with, I don't think it's super high absorption. By Mel wanting to ditch the whole category. Yeah, maybe. [laughs]
- 37:15 Mel: I, I think it's a zero. I think the category can remain until we see whether there is something that makes us say like, *no, this absolutely has to be categorized as a high level absorption*. But until I see that I am leaning towards *I don't like the category at all*.

Focusing on sample 5.2

- 37:33 RTH: That's 5.1, 5.2 we have the, an issue with unsymbolized thinking, I think *maybe*. 5.2,
- 37:44 JBK: Uh, yeah, I would say maybe, too. I see the case for maybe.
- 37:50 Mel: Oh yeah, yeah. I agree. I found this like, yeah I probably forgot about that category there. Cuz when I just categorized it in the other ways, it felt like, no, but this is a bit different and it's not being represented properly. [Russ changes the cell in column *F* (*unsymbolized thinking*) of sample 5.2 to be 0.5.]
- 38:11 RTH: So now to the high level of absorption.
- 38:25 JBK: Oh, I was the only one who put high absorption? That seems like a pretty engrossing
- 38:29 RTH: You put high absorption and Mel and I didn't.
- 38:33 JBK: But um, yeah, I had a different bar. I just had a different bar. It seems pretty engrossing, but is it totally all-consumingly absorbing? I I don't, I don't think so. So...
- 38:55 RTH: What I would say is with anybody other than Mel, if, if somebody had a visual image of Matty Healy or if they were hearing Matty Healy, or if they were innerly speaking "Matty Healy," or if they had not words, words present to Matty Healy, we would not say this was *absorbed*. We would say this was all inner seeing, or inter hearing, or inner speaking, or words present or whatever. But for Mel, where the bar for absorption... [pause] I still can't see it! I, I
- 39:39 JBK: [laughs] I'm fine taking it out. I'm,
- 39:48 Mel: I'm not commenting on that category any more!

- 39:48 JBK: [laughs] But there's something to be said for you hating a category so much, y'know. But, uh, you...
- 39:57 Mel: [laughs] I just think that, yeah, I'm just, it feels like *so much guesswork* to assign a level of absorption to these things. And I am more comfortable with the *less* guesswork of the inverse of the category, which is the non-figurizing thing, which I think hints at being quite locked in holistically to the thing. I don't, I think absorption, now, the way it currently is, is referring to intensity level and stuff, which I just don't think there is a big enough distinction and is just *so* speculative.
- 40:40 RTH: It is interesting in, in, in response to Julian's saying he is gonna give credit to Mel [he refers to JBK 36:56: "By Mel wanting to ditch the whole category"], most often in these DES situations [he refers to the green meetings], the, the "Mel" person is not there. And uh, but it would be the, [Mel: Yeah.] this is good evidence where for why *if*, if the person that we were dealing with was invested in the situation, as Mel seems to be, then it would be a good idea to have Mel present. Most of the time we don't. [inaudible] That's the sort of limitation of what we can do.
- 41:17 Mel: That's quite interesting.
- 41:18 RTH: So we're gonna leave, we're gonna leave this as it is until we, until we either exhaust ourselves or
- 41:27 JBK: About that. Yeah. I wonder if I'm being too influenced by you, Mel, like just cuz it's your experience, y'know, to trust that. [Mel: Mmm.] But I feel like the, I feel like I'd be more wary of that if you were repeating conventional wisdom, or like the obvious thing. But to me the obvious thing seems to be to say, *oh yeah, this conversation was more absorbed*, y'know. And to me you're saying the less obvious thing, the less kind of presuppositional thing. So it's like I'm, it's making me really consider it, y'know.
- 42:13 RTH: Well, shall we skip these, which seems to be probably in the category, or do we wanna look at them and get down to this one where at least Mel said,
- 42:27 JBK: Yeah, let's skip, skip my .5s.
- 42:29 RTH: Skip up to 6.2. We can always come back to them,
- 42:34 JBK: But I think it's the same
- 42:37 RTH: So I will mark, I will mark these as skipped for now. The yellow just means we didn't do those. If we, if, if, we need to, we can come back and look at them.
- 42:53 JBK: Mm-hmm.
- 42:54 RTH: And then we'll look at 6.2.

Focusing on sample 6.2

- 43:10 JBK: Alright.
- 43:21 Mel: [pause] Yeah. I just, my interpretation's changed where I've just consider this no different now.
- 43:30 RTH: It still seems that way to me.
- 43:35 JBK: Yeah.
- 43:36 RTH: You wanna say anything about that Julian?
- 43:40 JBK: Um, I feel like the kind of two scales: there's the scale where we just ditch the whole thing, and there's the scale where like we have just different bars for what counts as *absorbed*. [Mel: Hmm.] Um, so by the different bars thing, yeah, I don't think it's especially intensely absorbed. By the ditching the whole thing. [laughs], I mean, yeah. I might lean towards that direction more.
- 44:19 RTH: So the different, the different bars thing is an important, fundamental, I guess you might say epistemological consideration. Because if it comes down to different bars, then I think, I think DES doesn't, isn't interested in that. Because, because there's no, there's no way to, there, there is no possible way I, that I can think of to anchor the bars. [JBK: Mmm.] In what way is Mel's level of absorption different from my level of absorption? And if I give a 3 to Mel, is that the same as a 3 to me or whatever? [JBK: Mm-hmm.] I just don't, I don't see how that can be. And that's *different from* something like, *is inner speaking present?* I, I don't think that's *much* a matter of a bar. That's the matter of there are words strung along, maybe there's some definitions involved and there's some difficulties involved. I accept that. But, but for the most part, the presence or absence of inner speaking is not a matter of bars. Bars at the edges, where here bars seem sort of at the center.

44:19 Julian comments: This way to think about it struck me. If there's a clear phenomenon that we're trying to rate, we may sometimes disagree on the rating without denying the phenomenon exists. For example, if we're trying to say if an inner seeing is clear or not clear—we're not denying that there is inner seeing. But if all we have is the rating itself—the bar is at the center—it's not clear what's actually there.

It reminds me of having a pain scale for bodily sensations. It can be so subjective and so hard to compare pain scales. And it's useful to pull back and question—are we just assuming pain is there? As something somehow independent from the sensation itself? Or at least as something that can be abstracted and rated? It seems like we've run into a similar kind of issue.

Russ comments: The pain example is difficult—I will come back to that in the next paragraph. A purer counter example here, I think, is the conscientiousness that I describe in my 46:21 comment. There is no phenomenon of conscientiousness; there is behavior (making the bed, doing the homework) that is directly apprehendable and could be described as "conscientious," but that does *not* mean that *conscientiousness itself* is ever directly apprehended—conscientiousness is not a phenomenon and is never directly apprehended.

Pain is problematic as a counter example because we're not denying that there is pain—there *is* a phenomenon of pain. The problem with pain is that its intensity is of fundamental importance in its definition—at what level of intensity does a tickle become a pain? By contrast, intensity is *not* a constitutive factor with inner speaking or inner seeing.

Julian comments: That makes sense. It's a question of how central the bars are. For inner speaking, it's a clear phenomenon in direct experience. For pain, it's in direct experience but rating it becomes subjective and undefinable. Here, for absorption, the only thing that we have is the rating. The bar is the center. There is no direct experience *of* absorption. Same for conscientiousness, as you say.

45:37 JBK: [Mel: Mm-hmm.]

45:40 RTH: And I just, I just can't, I can't see how a science can be, can be worthwhile in the long run if it *fundamentally* depends on the bars. Hmm. If, if bars are error, fine, we can, we can deal with that. But if bars are the whole deal,

46:06 JBK: So if we're saying this category is too much and where you set the bar and none of us really know where the bar is

46:15 RTH: Or even if there is a or, or even if there is a bar. [JBK: Yeah.] Even if there is a category.

46:20 JBK: Yeah.

46:21 RTH: And, and, and the reason I guess I'm sensitive to that is I think mo I think most of psychology is about that. Y'know, we're dealing with ego strength, whatever the fuck that is. And uh, and or, or y'know, take a dart and throw it into us most psychology papers and they're, they're about some construct that people think they know what they're talking about. But I just don't trust it, and I don't think a science of psychology that rests on it can work.

46:21 Russ comments: The level of the bar is part of the distinction between fidelity and validity (see the comment at 36:02). Ego strength, conscientiousness, extraversion (for example) are all validity-based constructs. They depend for the existence on ratings (typically on Likert scales) and the intercorrelation of those ratings. All those ratings are dependent on levels or bars idiosyncratically applied by individual questionnaire raters. There is no *phenomenon* of conscientiousness, nothing to point to and say *that is conscientiousness*. There is making the bed (which can be rated as conscientious); there is doing your homework (which can be rated as conscientious); there is regularly visiting your friend in the hospital (which can be rated as conscientious). But there is no conscientiousness itself—no *phenomenon* of conscientiousness.

By contrast, inner speaking, inner seeing (for examples) are phenomena—that is, they are fidelity-based constructs. Inner speaking is directly apprehended by a person (privately, to be sure, but that is a different matter). Yes, there can be some disagreement about what should be called inner speaking (for example), but that

disagreement can be ironed out, leaving only a relatively small room for idiosyncratic application of concepts.

I criticize faux generalizations (see the comment at 29:15) because faux generalizations live in the realm of validity, whereas DES is concerned with fidelity. If DES interviewers allow themselves to honor a faux generalization, they have abandoned the realm of fidelity, which is to say, they have abandoned DES.

46:54 JBK: Yeah.

46:58 RTH: All right. So we're gonna skip this one. [refers to column K for sample 6.4]

Focusing on sample 6.5

47:01 JBK: [Mel: Mm-hmm.] I think there was another one where it was a bit more than nothing. [RTH: Right.] But I think there is something about... Well, Mel, you were saying us assuming that conversations are more absorbing and that, I don't know, the mail or Instagram is less absorbing. That's another one where I wondered: did we just kind of presume it was less absorbing because it was Instagram? So, but, but yeah, we can,

47:33 Mel: Mmm.

47:35 RTH: Well we've got some, we've got some places down here where you all originally agreed. *Here*, [points at column L for sample 6.5] I'm guessing this is gonna be a place where Julian forgot this is 6.5 sensory awareness bodily.

47:49 Mel: Yeah. The sub-characterization.

47:49 Russ comments: We have concluded the discussion up through sampling day 6. The rectification interview continues for another hour, covering through sampling day 13, but because preparing transcripts is a lot of work, we have not transcribed the rest of the interview. The audio and video are available at <https://youtu.be/1Svf0y2DCSM>.

We have seen here the rectification process in action: we have seen how the sample-by-sample consideration of two concepts that were created in the green meeting ("Not singling out, Not Editorializing, Not creating anything extra, Not particularizing, Not figure-izing, Not Mel-izing," here column J; and "High intensity level, High concentration, High absorption level," here column K) have resulted in the abandonment of the column-K construct, and incorporation of some of its aspects into column J. That refinement of descriptions of phenomena is the heart of the rectification procedure.

We have also seen that the heart of rectification is *not* rater reliability. We have repaired rater oversights and other mistakes, and that is a good thing, but it is not why we undertake the rectification process.