

Michael Pollan
Michael Interview 1

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the January 31 interview with Michael that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/HSrCvLN7qr4>. In brown are conversations about the Descriptive Experience Sampling process that took place during the interview. In green are 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

Michael: Michael Pollan

- 0:01 RTH: It, it is being recorded. I dunno whether you can record and I separately, unless you screen. I can't
- 0:06 Michael: Unmute. I, I would've to use my phone or something.
- 0:08 RTH: Yeah. You can screencast or something. And, uh, but I will, I will send you a copy of this. [Michael: Great.] after I doctor it up.
- 0:19 Michael: [laughs] Okay.
- 0:20 RTH: I gotta take out, take out all the dumb things I say leave in the dumb things you say in the
- 0:24 Michael: Fair enough.
- 0:25 RTH: That's the advantage of being the one that's doing the taping.
- 0:28 Michael: Yes. Power!
- 0:30 RTH: So this is gonna be your first day. [Michael: Mm-Hmm.] And you sent me an email saying that it was, that, that you were somewhat distracted or focused on or something. I forget what what you said about the wearing of the beeper.
- 0:45 Michael: Yeah. I mean, I'm, I'm assuming I'll get used to it, but I was hyper-aware of the fact that, uh, I could get a beep at any time. And, um, uh, and what would I be thinking? And was I thinking anything? [laughs]
- 1:02 RTH: So I would, I I would say that's con, con, common. Yeah. And I would ask whether you got any beeps that, what that caught in you in the act of that kind of thinking? Or, or we can, yes.

- 1:16 Michael: We'll get there. Well, when we get to the second beep, something interesting happened around that. Um, so I did, and there's also that whenever you have something in your ear, you're disassociated from the, the here and now and, um, or at least I am. Um, but I'm sure I'll get used to it. Uh,
- 1:34 RTH: Well, I, what I, what I think about that is two things. One is most people do get used to it. Not every, not everybody. And so I'm not, and and I *don't* want us to *pretend* that you got used to it if you didn't get used to it. [Michael: Yeah.] Most people, most people do. Cuz it's not that interesting to be thinking about the earphone for however many hours. [Michael: Yeah.] And whatever. And I would also say that most people find that even though they thought they were thinking about the earphone all the time, that most people don't get beeps like that. So what I think happens is that you think about the earphone, and then you think, oh my God, I'm thinking about the earphone. I'm thinking about the earphone all the time. *And* it is a fact that all the time that you're thinking about the earphone, you *are in fact* thinking about the earphone. So it seems like you're thinking about the earphone all the time. But, but usually that's not the case. And, um,
- 2:22 Michael: Well, I wasn't, I was thinking about the earphone in part, but the earphone made me think about my thoughts. Like, am I having thoughts now? What are they? Do y'know what I mean? For the whole period I was wearing it. Yeah. I was using some of the bandwidth of my, uh, awareness to focus on something I wouldn't ordinarily focus on. Um, although I've been hyper-aware of that too, because of this project [RTH: Right.] that I'm writing about.
- 2:51 RTH: Well, what I would, what I would say is that we should just, we should do the, we should look at the beeps. [Michael: Yeah.] Uh, and then we should look at, at the beeps next time. And, and [Michael: Yeah.] see how it develops and see, we'll see how this kind of thing develops. [Michael: Yeah.] Because I, I don't want to talk us into, into kind of pretending that things get better or whatever, things get easier or whatever. I would much rather have us face the fact that things are easy, if they're easy and difficult if they're difficult. And, uh,
- 3:19 Michael: Yeah, I think that makes good sense. Um, I did record in your little notebook, and then what I did since I was at my desk for most of these, um, wrote slightly more extensive notes, but immediately after the rough ones in the, in the book. Um,...
- 3:39 RTH: And by writing, by writing more extensive notes, you mean like on your computer?
- 3:42 Michael: Yeah. I have a file on my computer. [RTH: Okay.] Uh, um, sort of my DES diary. And, um, uh, uh, so I have a problem writing by hand. My handwriting's really atrocious. So I, I often go to the computer as soon as possible.
- 3:59 RTH: And I, I don't have a, I don't have a, I don't *care*, I guess I should say one way or one way or the other. [Michael: Yeah.] The object is, is to get at your, your experience at the moment of the beep, however that is [Michael: Yeah.] best accomplished by *you*. And, and if, and if jotting and then typing is the best way to do it, this go around, then good. And, and maybe that will develop over time and

4:25 Michael: Good.

4:25 RTH: You'll learn more about how to do it or how not to do it, or whatever.

4:28 Michael: Okay. Great. Anyway, it was interesting though.

4:32 RTH: Alright. Number 1.

SAMPLE 1.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

4:34 Michael: So number 1, uh, I put the thing in at, at, uh, nine o'clock and, um, or a little bit after. And I was worried for the first 25 minutes that it wasn't working, [laughs] of course. But then it went off, it was 9:34. I ha I was standing online at a bakery called the Cheeseboard, uh, behind a woman wearing loud plaid pants when the beeper went off. Um, at the moment it went off, I was deliberating whether to, in addition to the coffee I was there to get, buying a roll to make my sandwich for lunch on, *or* using this heel of bread I still had at home. And, uh, do I get a new roll, or do I use what's at home? Profound debate [laughs]. Um, and I pictured both. Um, it was, I think primarily a visual experience, cuz I could see both.

And the pros and cons were the role would be fresher, but it was also, I knew their rolls were all white flour. And the bread I had at home was whole grain, which I try to rely on. I was also aware of, um, the atmosphere. I mentioned the, the women in, the woman in front of me wearing loud plaid pants. It smelled very cheesy in the place. Um, and I was conscious of, as we all are now, how close to stand in line, um, given, y'know, covid, I mean, giving people a little more space than usual. So that's kind of, um, what that first beep was about. And I was standing obviously.

6:31 RTH: So there's a lot of things that are going on in that, in that *description*. There's the woman with a bl, plaid pants. There's the *rest* of the atmosphere, including the smell of the cheese. And then, then there's the thought process about the roll and the bread and the, the, uh, notion that the, that the heel is probably not as fresh, but, but whole wheat or whatever. All. So, so the question is, is all that stuff directly before the footlights of your consciousness at the moment that the beep interrupts you? Which, and by the "at that moment" I mean, actually one microsecond just before that.

7:13 Michael: Yeah. Um, it was. I mean, I think I'm, y'know, the first thing that I wrote down was this debate, y'know, to buy the roll or not. [RTH: Okay.] Um, and then when I started thinking about that moment, I was like, the smell. I was aware of before, but I probably started paying attention to it after the beep. So, y'know, is it actually at that very moment that I was aware of the smell? I dunno.

7:51 RTH: So that's the kind of thing that, that is *interesting*, because there's quite a bit of debate out there in consciousness studies about whether, whether that kind of stuff is ongoing at the moment of the beep. And I don't want to take, I don't want to take

a position one way or the other about that. [Michael: Yeah.] I don't *have* a position about that. So, so I think it *could be* that at the moment of the beep, I'm both thinking about the roll-heel debate, whatever, and smelling and seeing plaid pants or whatever. But it's *also* possible that what's really going on is the, is the, some kind of debate about the roll and, and that the other stuff is background or context or whatever.

8:39 Michael: Yeah. And the simultaneity of a, of a conscious moment is something to... Is it really simultaneous or are things coming in very quick succession when you start thinking about it? And I, I wasn't clear. I mean, I do think, and thinking about other beeps during the day, that I have a sensory experience, at the same time, I'm having a thought experience that those two things *can* happen simultaneously. That's my sense of it. But it's something to pay attention to.

9:06 RTH: Well, there's no doubt about it that, that there are sensory experiences ongoing probably all the time, depending on how you define *experience*. And, and that's part of the part, part of the debate, part of what it is that we're gonna try to hash out here. So for example, you have no doubt been sensorially experiencing your backside and your elbows and whatever as they lean on the chair while we're having this conversation, because you haven't fallen outta your chair. [He mimes falling out of his chair] [Michael: Right. (laughs)] Y'know, so, so you're *processing* that stuff, and so it makes sense to say you have been experiencing in a intelligent way. I mean, it's, it's not just that that experience is passing through, but you're adjusting your posture and, and, and whatever. So there is *a form of* experiencing that is sensory that's happening all the time. The question.... *But* I would say there's, it's also probably another form of experience that would say, well, your backside and your elbows and whatever have *not* been part of your *directly apprehended* experience. And I don't, I don't wanna put too much weight on the words "directly apprehended," but at this moment to point out, there's at least two different kinds of modes of experiencing one that's mostly before the footlights of consciousness and one that is happening...

10:30 Michael: Right. Backstage.

10:30 RTH: ...more or less on autopilot or backstage or what, whatever, whatever metaphor we wanna say. I don't, I don't want to commit myself to any of the *metaphors*, but I do want us to notice that they're *different*.

10:42 Michael: Yeah. And that's the thing, when you use the phrase "footlights of consciousness," I immediately think, well, no, it wasn't in the forefront. Um, and it was continuous. I mean, the smell was continuous for the whole time I was standing there. And as you know, you notice things at the beginning, and then they, they, they retreat into the background. Um, so I dunno, it's something to pay attention to. I'm, I'm just not sure where the sensory fits into this and how much it's part of the moment and how much it's the, it surrounds the moment.

11:18 RTH: And, and I, and you're probably noticing I'm not taking a position on that. I, [Michael: I know!] the, I want us to be, I, I want us to, to have that be a, a question

going forwards. And maybe some number of days down the road, we will have an answer to that question, and maybe we won't. And, and that's what makes life interesting. [Michael: Right.] That's, that's what makes this work worth doing, doing, I think.

11:47 Michael: Yeah. I don't feel pressure to come to a conclusion, at least not yet.

11:51 RTH: So, so I'm gathering from our discussion that the, maybe the most prominent portion of your experience has to do with the roll and the heel.

12:00 Michael: Yeah. Whether to buy it or not.

12:03 RTH: And, and that description, as I recall it, was something in the nature of possibly visual. I'm *seeing*...

12:14 Michael: More visual than verbal. I don't remember words particularly attached. It was such a simple decision. I didn't feel I had to articulate anything to myself. Um, there was, it wasn't *all* visual, obviously. I wasn't just going this, this, that wouldn't exactly be a thought. Um, so there was some, y'know, the question piece, I dunno what that is.

12:39 RTH: So the, [coughs] Excuse me.

12:41 Michael: I mean, maybe uns symbolized, I dunno. Y'know, it may, it, it may be a thought that was so simple that it didn't need to rise to the level of having words attached.

12:57 RTH: So is it the case that the most prominent, the most salient, the most unambiguous portion of your experience at the moment of the beep is the visual? Is that true?

13:13 Michael: Yeah, I think so.

13:15 RTH: Okay. Then let's talk about that portion. So what, and, and by visual, does this mean, like, I'm seeing in my imagination, I'm innerly seeing something?

13:15 Russ comments: What motivates RTH's question here is actually quite different from what it may appear. It may appear that RTH has accepted that the visual aspect was the most salient feature of Michael's experience, but in fact RTH is quite skeptical about that. Michael's 10:42 turn suggests potential confusion about the role of sensory awareness; his 12:14 and 12:41 turns suggest that he may have some presuppositions about how experience works—that a simple decision does not require articulation, does not require words. So RTH is *not* inquiring about the visual because he accepts it is the most important or the most salient. He is inquiring about the visual *as if* it were important/salient. The *as if* is a big deal; RTH is engaged in a line of questioning that *might reveal* whether the visual is salient, and, more importantly, might provide some conversational practice that may be useful on subsequent sampling days.

In short, RTH is not really aimed backwards at Michael's 9:34 experience; he is aimed forwards at tomorrow's (no next week's, or whenever) sampling. [See the comment at 38:24.]

13:28 Michael: I think it was just kind of like a visual shorthand for a roll. Y'know, I wasn't close enough up to the counter to see the roll, so it wasn't like in the basket with all the other rolls. It was kind of freestanding as kind of like an emoji of a roll. Um, y'know, once I got to the front of the line, I would see the rolls, the actual rolls. But this one was definitely just in my imagination. And I saw the heel of bread too.

13:56 RTH: And did you see the roll in the heel in the same way?

14:02 Michael: Yeah. Both kind of without much context. Um, and not at the same time. It was like, or: roll *or* heel.

14:15 RTH: And, and one *or*? Roll—heel and that's it? [Michael: Yeah.] Or roll—heel—roll—heel?

14:23 Michael: I think I just remember it once. [RTH: Okay.] But I could, I could be wrong about that.

14:27 RTH: And it...

14:28 Michael: It didn't linger.

14:30 RTH: Okay.

14:30 Michael: And that's why it felt very much *Okay—that moment*. I mean, it was clearer than some of the other moments that I'm, I'm gonna describe, that, cuzt he, I was so shocked by the buzzer. First time I'd actually heard it, y'know, in, in nature. And, um, uh, I was like, *oh, yeah, the bread question*.

14:53 RTH: Okay. So I'm, I still wanna finish off talking about the visual stuff before we move on to something else. The, so do you *see*, do you, is is your experience of *seeing* the roll and then seeing and *then* seeing the heel of the bread?

15:16 Michael: Yeah.

15:17 RTH: One roll, roll,

15:19 Michael: Roll first. One roll; heel of the bread second.

15:23 RTH: And do you see the roll straight on? Or from an angle? Or on a plate? Or

15:31 Michael: It's kind of floating in space.

15:33 RTH: So what...

15:34 Michael: It's not, it, it doesn't have a context.

- 15:37 RTH: And, and do you see it straight on, like this is the roll? [Uses hands to mime a vertical circle] Or do you see it at an angle, like this is the roll? [uses hands to mime a horizontal circle] Or?
- 15:44 Michael: Well, the rolls they have are, um, shaped a little bit like a pillow and, uh, a little flatter on the bottom, a little rounder. All, all, um, they're, they're made from the dough that's used to make, um, a baguette. So they have that kind of color. And, uh, yeah, it was sitting the way it would sit, but it was floating.
- 15:44 Russ comments: When I ask about what he (innerly) sees, and he tells me about what the real world, that is an indication that he is not secure in his description of *seeing*. That is the way first-day sampling interviews usually are.
- 16:07 RTH: Okay. And in color.
- 16:11 Michael: Yeah.
- 16:17 RTH: So I've, I've heard something like, "I see this the way it is flat side down, color the color it is." And I've also heard something like "an emoji of a..."
- 16:28 Michael: Because there was a little bit abstract. It wasn't a particular roll. It was, y'know, platonic Cheeseboard role. I mean, it was very much their kind of roll. I wasn't like, it wasn't like a Kaiser, or it wasn't like a real, if there was a real emoji of a roll, it wasn't that it was very specific to this bakery and how they do rolls.
- 16:51 RTH: Okay. And, and, and seen? This is the experience of *seeing*, even though my eyeballs aren't looking at a real roll?
- 16:58 Michael: Well, I wasn't hallucinating, but, but I, it was, I was seeing, yeah.
- 16:58 Russ comments: Note that RTH has not disagreed with, nor challenged in any way, Michael's characterization of seeing the roll. There are grounds for skepticism, as is typically the case on day 1, but it is not necessary to express those grounds. He has demonstrated the kinds of questions that are necessary to ask and answer about the experience of seeing, and it is likely that the practice in dealing with those questions will be profitable for Michael going forward.
- 17:06 RTH: Okay. And then let's go to the heel. The, so the he, what do you see about the heel? Well,
- 17:12 Michael: The heel is very precise because, um, y'know, if, if you're at the end of a loaf of bread, as you slice it gradually becomes angled because of the way the knife is built. And, um, so by the, given where I was [laughs] because loaf of bread, it was triangular. [RTH: Okay.] And it was very clearly triangular, which means it's gonna be a little tough to get a clean slice out. RTH: Okay.] So there's a little challenge involved in that.

- 17:44 RTH: So in, in my imagination at the moment of the beep, I am seeing a, I'm *seeing*, seeing a triangular piece of heel of bread.
- 17:55 Michael: Well, y'know, at the *moment* there was probably one or the other, but they were so close together that I could, I couldn't distinguish cuz I didn't see them simultaneously. It was this—this. Um, but by the time you're writing something down, even, even a second or two later, you're recollecting it, and, um, as best you can, right? But...
- 18:27 RTH: So part of, part of this exercise, part of descriptive experience sampling, is recognizing that things, things that happen in, in the physical world, don't necessarily... The *rules* of the physical world don't apply necessarily to the rules of the, of the imaginary world. [Michael: Mm-Hmm.] So in the *real* world, you would have to see a roll and *then* see a piece of bread. But in the *experiential* world, it is quite possible, I *think*, or at least we should accept the *possibility* of it's being possible, that I could have the *experience* of seeing the one thing and then seeing the next thing, and yet have those things happen at the same time, even though there's some experience of first one and then another. That doesn't mean that they were *in fact* first one and [Michael: Right.] then the other.
- 19:11 Michael: Yeah. When I, when I, in that moment where I recollected it, and I'm taking out my pad to write this down, um, I have a sense of two-ness, two moments, [RTH: Two...] in that one moment. See what I said. [looks at notebook] Yeah. It just says, "thinking about lunch, get a roll or use bread at home. Visual." That's, that's all I wrote down at that moment.
- 19:51 RTH: So, so [pause] so what, what, what I think the descriptive experience tries to do is to, is to get us some practice in talking about these things so that the next time we can be somewhat more ready to talk or skilled at talking or, or whatever. And so a lot of what, a lot of what you have said is, I think context. Like you told me about how to slice bread and, and the angles changing and whatever. I'm gathering that was not *seen* or not really *experienced* at this moment. But when you're explaining it to me, you're gonna tell me about the different angles. But it's also possible that, that that is *not* context. That there is something in the, in the seeing that *experientially implies* the cutting.
- 20:41 Michael: Well, the, I mean, yeah, the cutting was implied by the angle, and I'm looking at this awkward, awkward object in my mind's eye. Um,
- 20:50 RTH: So then the question would be something like: Am I seeing the awkward cut of this bread? Or am I seeing the piece of bread that happens to be awkwardly cut? The question is, what is...
- 21:04 Michael: Yeah. I would say the latter.
- 21:04 Russ comments: RTH's point in this conversation is not so much to obtain an answer to the question, as to get some practice in parsing the kind of distinction that lies behind the question.

- 21:06 RTH: Okay.
- 21:07 Michael: I mean, it's a funny looking image cuz it's so angled. Um, I'm not thinking *because I cut it that way*. I know exactly what was waiting for me at home. [RTH: Okay.] I'm just explaining to you why it got to look that way.
- 21:21 RTH: Right. And that's, and that is the challenge. But the, but in, but experience, what I guess I'm, the point that I'm trying to make in this paragraph is: that it's possible to see *a cut* and my experience is of *the awkward cut* and the rest of the bread is sort of just what supports this cut, cut thing. Or it's possible that I'm seeing a piece of bread, and it is in fact cut in an awkward angle. But my experience is of seeing the bread and the angle is just the way the bread happens to be. [Michael: Yeah.] And those are, those could be, it *could be* two very different kinds of experiences.
- 22:04 Michael: Experiences, yeah. [RTH coughs] I, uh, lean toward the latter.
- 22:09 RTH: Okay.
- 22:11 Michael: I have to separate out the context that I'm giving you from my experience.
- 22:16 RTH: Right. And that's, that's part of the practice. And it's, and it's, and it's not something that comes naturally to *anybody*, because the, the context and the experience seem like the same thing.
- 22:30 Michael: But, but they're really not. I mean, in a way you're translating the experience for, for a third party or second party by giving a context.
- 22:43 RTH: Yes. The con, the, the context is *in a way* important to understand the experience. Mm-Hmm. But the context is not necessarily a *before the footlights of consciousness* portion of the experience and, right. And, and that's what I would like us to keep, keep [Michael: Yeah.] track of. So...
- 23:02 Michael: Yeah, the thing that I'm left with is like, where does the sensory experience fit in? And as you say, is it, is it background or is it really present? And how much can happen simultaneously, too? It's a question. I'm, I'm struggling with as I think about these things.
- 23:02 Russ comments: Perfect. Michael is interested in the important questions and is not presuming to answer them. That is the aim of sampling day 1 (and all other days, as well).
- 23:22 RTH: Well, I would, I would say we should continue to wonder about that, [Michael: Okay.] and we should not try to prematurely answer that question. And *maybe* we will end up being *able* to answer that question, and maybe not. And, but I'm *pretty sure* that if we try to answer that question *prematurely*, then we'll *never* be able to answer it in a way that I would believe.

23:44 Michael: Mm-Hmm.

23:47 RTH: So in this question, in this beep, there's the smell, and the plaid, and the closeness, and the whatever. And that is *no doubt* part of your experience *in some manner of speaking* of experience. The question is what the manner of that experience is, whether that's more like context-y kind of thing, or down in the weeds kind of thing, or whether it's directly apprehended as close to directly apprehended as the bread roll.

24:20 Michael: Yeah, it's, and it's, it's really interesting how hard it is to say, um, and that, uh, y'know, is there a hierarchical relationship between the main, y'know, the main show, which is the bread question, um, and the other things are subordinated to that in some, in some way? Or is it all a single unit of experience? And I'm not sure.

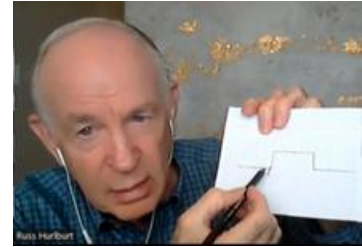
24:45 RTH: Good! So I'm, I'm thinking maybe we should go on to beep number 2. [Michael: Definitely! At this rate...] We've spent 20 minutes talking, talking about this beep and [Michael: Yeah.] and, uh...

SAMPLE 1.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

24:55 Michael: So beep 2 is, uh, was kind of a spooky one. Um, so I'm doing email. I'm at my desk, uh, I'm writing an email to my sister Dana, who had asked what I wanted for my birthday next week. I was in the process of sending her my pants size—I, I was, I had asked for jeans—when I looked up to look out the window. It's, it was this yesterday. It was this gorgeous sun filled day. I actually have a view of Mount Tamalpais from my window. Um, but on the window ledge in the foreground is a photograph of my father, who died in 2018. Um, at the moment I started looking at it, I said, "the beep's gonna come right now, I know it!" And the beep came right then. So I'm very precise about like, what I was looking at then. Um, my thoughts...

25:54 So this is a picture that I've seen many times before. I had put it away, uh, and just took it out, uh, a couple days ago. Um, it's the last, really, the last picture of him. And the thoughts accompanying it as I looked at it that moment was just how great he looks. He's smiling broadly, he's got really good color in his face, broad smile. Um, and it's, it was taken over Thanksgiving. Um, and he died like two months later. And it's just hard to believe that he'd gone from that picture of health, although we knew he wasn't healthy. I mean, he had, he had lung cancer. And, um, but that weekend was just such a wonderful weekend for everybody. And he was in such good spirits. And it was captured by, um, a niece of mine who took this picture. Um, so I was thinking about him and, um, and specifically how he looked. And, but again, the context was this was a, a, a particular moment in his, um, in his dying that, uh, was very vivid to, to me and to everybody else. Um, and it's just, it's so hard to believe that by January he was, he was gone. And this is right around the anniversary of his death right now.

27:17 RTH: Okay. So am gonna draw us a picture here. This is a, this is a beep, and time is time is going this way, this is time over time over here somewhere. And the beep happens right here. [Michael: Mm-Hmm.] And it continues to beep. And you push the button and you stop the beep. And then time, time keeps going on.



27:41 Michael: Right.

27:41 RTH: And what I want us, the, the moment that I'm interested in is the moment that is right, right just before the beep occurs, basically. And there's two, it seems to me, what, what I'm, what I'm trying to get as, I wanna make sure I understand what you're talking about, the time sequence of things here. So there's a thought that, "oh, the beeps gonna happen right now," and there's a seeing...

28:05 Michael: Yeah. And that's where that little line drops on your drawing.

28:09 RTH: This line right here?

28:10 Michael: Yeah! Because it was the, it was a, a split second before the beep that I'm looking at the picture, say, "I bet it's gonna beep," and then it beeped.

28:20 RTH: Okay. So...

28:20 Michael: It was like, so yeah, go ahead.

28:24 RTH: So if we, if we, if we magnify this portion of the, of my schematic here.

28:31 Michael: Mm-Hmm.

28:32 RTH: There's the thought. He looks great in this picture, and there's the background. I, I, I think of later on how, how it's, well, all the background is later on, he dies, a couple of months later he dies, and we knew he had lung cancer, whatever, all that stuff. Where, where does that fit in the timeline? Is it, I'm, I'm thinking about that out here somewhere. I'm thinking about how great he looks and, but then at the very moment of the beep, it's the, it's the thought "I bet it's gonna beep right now." Or is it, I bet it's gonna beep right now, and then I'm thinking about that and *then* it comes, if we were to magnify or zoom in on this,

29:14 Michael: That's a hard question to answer. Was I having that thought? Uh, I think I was, I think I was in the midst of that thought...

29:27 RTH: Which one?

29:29 Michael: ...that how great he looks in this picture. Um, and then I thought to myself, "it's gonna beep." Because, because I'd settled on it. I didn't just, do y'know what I mean? I'd settled on the picture and started thinking about it. And one of my thoughts was, "I know it's gonna beep," so, the, the thoughts about him feel to me,

pretty simultaneously with the thought about it's gonna beep. It wasn't a new thought. It's probably the thought I have every time I look at this picture, it goes with looking at this picture.

- 30:17 RTH: So first off, I, I would say when I, when, when I talked about this schematic a minute ago, I made it seem like there was, there could only be one thing going on at a time. I made it seem like there had to be either the thought about your father first and then the thought about it. That's not really true. Those could be simultaneous. So I want to, yeah. I *don't* want us, I don't *want* to be implying that they have to be first one and then the other. [Michael: Right.] But if they *were* first one and then the other, then I would like us to be clear about that as, as best we can. [Michael: Yeah.] And I would also like to say that while it's true that the beep in, in the real world has a pretty rapid rise time, y'know, it goes from not beeping to beeping in a few milliseconds, probably four or five, or in real world, four or five milliseconds before the speaker starts to really vibrate, and your, your, your drum vibrates, but that does *not* necessarily mean that, that your *experience* is of a fast rise time. [Michael: Right.] You, you, you have to process the beep and recognize that that's the beep and whatever. And that takes gray matter. And
- 31:20 Michael: Also it take, y'know, since I'm new to this, I fumble around, so I'm getting a longer beep than I might get ideally because I gotta find it. It's in my pocket. I gotta find the button. I'm, I'm not, it's not like I can get it off within a second.
- 31:36 RTH: So I would say that I would, I would say *how long* the beep goes doesn't really matter. Yeah. The beep, the beep could go on for five minutes and it, that's all down here. And I don't, and
- 31:46 Michael: You're looking at the beginning,
- 31:47 RTH: I don't care about what your experience is here, I'm fumbling in my pocket. Where's the beeper? God damn it. Whatever. Right? That's, that's after the beep. I don't, that's not what we're interested in. *But* what you're saying about the *skill* of it, I gotta find the beeper and whatever that does alter your ability to differentiate the kinds of things that we're talking about right now. And as you get better about that and you figure out where, where am I gonna put the beeper and what it, what the beeper sounds like, and whatever, all that stuff, that I think does make the *task* easier and [Michael: Yeah.] as the task gets easier....
- 32:23 Michael: Yeah, and also I just think psychologically it feels like a longer moment if the beep goes on longer, even though I know I'm supposed to concentrate on the onset of the beep. Um, I think it's stretching out that time. And I, I have to guard against that.
- 32:40 RTH: I do think you have to guard against that. I, I whether that, whether what you said is a true statement across a lot of people, y'know, longer beeps make for more longer experience, I don't, I don't, I don't have an opinion about that. If I had to bet against, I bet if I had to bet, I bet against it. [Michael: Mm-Hmm.] But I don't know. And, uh, and don't *much* care because I want to develop the skill of *not caring*. I want to develop *in you* this the skill of not caring what's happening here. [Michael:

Right.] That the only thing that I care about is, is that [points to sketch rise point]... What I, the only thing that, the only thing that I really care about is what's going on in flight and is *pierced by* [Michael: Right.] the beep. That throws a dart at that experience that catches that experience.

33:25 Michael: Yeah.

33:26 RTH: And that *might be* more than one thing. I'm happy, I'd be happy about that. But it, *and* it might be that there's, that there is something and then there is something else. And those two things are quite discrete and separate, in which case I would like to know which one happens to be caught by the beep. And I would also be happy to say, well, y'know, it seemed like there was one and then another, and the beep came in there somewhere and I can't tell you which is which, because it goes beyond my ability to capture that. And that's okay too, then.

33:59 Michael: Yeah. Well, y'know, there's a, I mean, the memory in conventional, non-experimental terms is, I was looking at this picture thinking about my dad, how good he looked and saying, "I bet while I'm doing this, the beep is gonna go off," and then it goes off. So you could say, technically the, the thought at the very moment of the beep is the beep. I mean, the anticipation of the beep that this is gonna happen, but it was so close, I, I, I, that thought was instantaneous. Whereas the thought about my father had a little more duration.

34:42 RTH: So when, what you, what you phrased it was, I thought, great. When you said something like "the conventional memory version" or whatever, I can't remember exactly what you said (I thought was better than what I just said), but, but because the, *but* I would say that the conventional memory version *of anything* is a combination of what happens right then and what happened last time you looked at the picture and what happened *two months ago* when you looked at the picture,...

35:05 Michael: Right! It's all mush.

35:06 RTH: ...and all, all all mushed together,...

35:07 Michael: And we're trying to disaggregate

35:09 RTH: ...and we're trying to disaggregate that. That's right. And, and that doesn't mean that we're trying to pretend like you've never looked at the picture, because obviously you *have* looked at the picture. [Michael: Sure.] *But* this *particular*, looking at the picture is not the same looking at the picture as the one that happened five minutes ago or five days ago, or five months ago [Michael: Right. or, or whatever. *And*, and, and I would say the first sampling day is, is designed to have the kinds of discussions that we're having right now. As I, I'm, I think I, I think I've said, I throw out data from the first, the first day, because I think, I think we have to decide: I have to hear from you what your concerns are, and then I have to tell you what I think about those concerns. And, and we have to start the process of refining our ability to communicate about that. And that's, that's gonna take some time. It always does take some time. And that's the, that's the way it is.

- 36:14 And, and I would say just sort of parenthetically, the, the reason that inner experience is, is hard to get at is because *first day interviews aren't easy* because we have to agree: I don't know what you're talking about. You don't know what I'm talking about. I don't know what he's talking about. I don't know what *I'm* talking about. We have to, we have to be honest about that
- 36:35 Michael: And find a common vocabulary.
- 36:37 RTH: Yeah. And most, most people don't wanna do that. Mo most people don't want to admit, I guess, that they dunno what they're talking about. And, and that makes the first day, the first day hard until you develop a taste for it. And then it's sort of pretty interesting each
- 36:55 Michael: Right. Well, it's pretty interesting already. I mean, just the, the fact that it's not easy, right? I mean, this is, it should be the easiest thing in the world, right? I mean, you're having experience and beeper goes off and you're relating what it is, but you realize that there's a lot of pressures on that moment.
- 37:12 RTH: Right. And, and my goal, my goal is to encourage us to look at that moment, but not to.... I, I have to convey to you, I don't know what the fuck we're talking about here. [Michael: Mm-Hmm.] so that, so that you don't try to do it *my way*. I don't *want* you to do it my way. I want you to... Other, other than my, my way is let, let's try to disaggregate the context from the experience and yesterday's experience from today's experience that I guess is *my way*. [Michael: Right.] I want to, I wanna do that, right? But, but I wanna, I wanna forthrightly convey that I don't know what we're gonna find. And I don't want to presume that I know that, because I don't want you to try to figure it out: Well, this is what Russ wants to tell me, wants me to tell him, and I'm gonna tell him.
- 38:05 Michael: And is that because people are so different?
- 38:09 RTH: Yes. And even if, and even if they're not dif, even if they're not so different, they're different *enough* that you gotta give them a chance to show where their, where their i, idiosyncrasies are.
- 38:23 Michael: Right.
- 38:24 RTH: But yeah, people are pretty different. Um, so I'd say we should go on to beep number 3.
- 38:24 Russ comments: DES is often characterized as being an attempt to figure out what the participant's inner experience is, given that what the participant says is somewhat ambiguous. But that that characterization is wrong in important ways. It would be better to say that DES is an attempt to help a participant in the future apprehend and describe his experience with greater fidelity (and therefore less ambiguity), so that we *don't have to* figure out what his inner experience is.

Notice for example, that RTH did *not* try to figure out what were the characteristics of Michael's thinking about the beep. Michael's descriptions were ambiguous in important ways; here is what how he has described this aspect:

24:55 I said, "the beep's gonna come right now, I know it!"

28:10 [I] say, "I bet it's gonna beep,"

29:29 I thought to myself, "it's gonna beep."

29:29 one of my thoughts was, "I know it's gonna beep."

33:59 and saying, "I bet while I'm doing this, the beep is gonna go off,"

Those locutions are ambiguous in two important ways: sometimes it is saying and sometimes not; and the words that are quoted vary from instance to instance.

Notice that RTH does *not* try figure out those ambiguities, nor does he try to help Michael figure them out.

RTH could have elected to inquire about one or the other of those ambiguities [see the comment about *as if* at 13:15], but if had done so, it would have been part of the attempt to try to help Michael develop an independent interest/skill/ability to sort through such things for himself, so that *next time* (of a time thereafter) he might be better able to quote himself accurately (if there are actually experienced words) or to recognize that there was a thought without words, or that what was described as a thought was actually context, or whatever. There is no formulaic way of determining how to advance that interest/skill/ability—in that regard, DES is more art than science.

SAMPLE 1.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

38:35 Michael: Yeah. Okay. These next, next couple, these next two, three. Yeah. Yeah. I'm in front of my computer as I am right now. As I am most of the day. I'm thinking for next beep day I might do a weekend day to get a little more variety. But, um, so this went off at 11:05. I was in the middle of typing this sentence" "The essay that accompanies it has some good links and references, including a mention of Dorothy Richardson, who apparently did a 13-volume novel, no wonder, uh, a 13 volume stream-of-consciousness novel. No wonder neither of us." And I'm typing *k* for know, the first letter of the word *know*. Um,

39:26 RTH: So I, I missed it. No. So "no wonder none of us". Is that...?

39:30 Michael: Of, no, no wonder neither of us *know* anything about this book or whatever. I, I, I dunno what the end of the sentence was gonna be, but it was gonna be, it was on that letter. Um, and I'm, I'm, this is an email I'm writing to someone I interviewed the day before. Um, she's, uh, an English author who's written a, a stream of consciousness novel that I think is really interesting and I'm gonna write about. Um, this email, which, which comes up twice because the second beep was very soon after and I was still in the middle of writing this email. Um, I'm pausing to be careful here. And the reason is I'm writing about saying that it's touchy for this interviewee. Um, Dorothy Richardson.... Her editor, when she submitted this, I have to give you a little context. So she wrote a thousand page Stream-of-Consciousness novel that's a single sentence, basically. Um, when she showed it to her editor, after working on her for eight years, her editor said, "oh, Dorothy Richardson already did this," and, and rejected it. Um, she ultimately found another publisher, and the book was very

successful. Um, but I'm bringing up Dorothy Richardson. Sore point. I'm trying to engage her in a continuing conversation by email. And, um, so I'm, I'm writing slowly and carefully. Um, but anyway, I was at that moment, and I had, uh, so I stopped there to, to record what happened. And, and, and, and the thought in *my* head is, *should I even be bringing up Dorothy Richardson?* Which neither of us, neither of us had read her, and might be a sore, a sore topic for her. So as I'm writing this, I'm, I'm, y'know, as you, do you do when you're writing, should I say this? Should I say that? But, but the, the actual moment was on that letter.

- 41:42 RTH: So the, the actual moment in the *physical* world is the *k* that's in the sentence "No wonder neither of us ____"
- 41:49 Michael: K know.
- 41:51 RTH: Right. So that, that, that pinpoints the physical, the physical beep comes with a *k*, that's it's interrupted.
- 41:59 Michael: Right, right there. The *k* is right there is right there. Yeah.
- 42:01 RTH: And, and is it the case that the experience...
- 42:05 Michael: Although it's a silent letter, so in my head I'm hearing know,
- 42:10 RTH: So that's, so, so now there's two questions here, or more, maybe more than, so are you hearing *know*, are you saying *know*, or are you thinking, should I even be talking about Dorothy Richardson? Or both? Or neither?
- 42:26 Michael: I think should I even be mentioning that as probably before the moment? Um, because I am drafting, I'm not pausing at that moment. Um, so, and when I write, I *hear*, I hear the words. So I think I am hearing the sound *know*. I mean, I'm, y'know, I, I don't move my lips, but I, I, I'm, I'm a writer who hears, hears the words. Um, so I have the nuh sound in my head as I'm writing the *k*.
- 43:02 RTH: Okay. And, and when you say that sound is in your head, what does that sound like? What do you mean?
- 43:14 Michael: For me, writing is a very oral process. Even, um, when I'm writing emails more than a visual process. I mean, I'm obviously checking to make sure it looks right as I write, but, um, I'm hearing the sounds, so,
- 43:28 RTH: So let me, let me, let me ask a little bit more concretely. So is, is this sound in a voice?
- 43:41 Michael: No, it's not that precise. It's not like I'm taking dictation, or I'm saying it myself.
- 43:49 RTH: So I hear it, but it's not in my voice...

- 43:51 Michael: [seems to quote himself slowly, apparently examining his experience] “No wonder neither of us know.” It’s a very kind of faint background-y thing. It’s kind of how I check when I’m writing, that it’s a good sentence. Cuz it sounds good. So it’s, it’s like, y’know, it’s like, I, I wouldn’t say it’s so prominent that it’s a voice. I’m not hearing voices, but the words, the words for me are as much a sound as they are a sight.
- 43:51 Russ comments: It’s a risky procedure to try to recreate an experience: an experience created on demand is not necessarily the same as an experience that is created in the natural sequence of things. Because this is the first sampling day, RTH does not comment on this.
- 44:35 RTH: So are you saying that the, I am somehow experiencing a stream of words, which is “no wonder, neither of us _____”
- 44:48 Michael: Know, knows.
- 44:53 RTH: And I’m processing that stream of words as like a mental stream of words, as opposed to a in-my-fingertips stream of words or an on-the-screen-stream of words, or a, is that right?
- 45:05 Michael: Well, I’m seeing it and feeling it cuz I’m typing. So when I type, when I type a word, I think, there are *three* things going on. There’s the *touch* on the keyboard, there’s what it’s *doing* on the screen. And there’s what I’m *hearing* in my head. And at that moment, it was the, what happens at the beginning of the word know in all three media.
- 45:38 RTH: So I, I agree that there, that there are those three things that are in some way going on. And whether those are going on in the same way, and whether they, whether they should be counted as experience (and the same kind of experience), I think is still up for grabs. And I’m not, I’m not trying to talk you out of anything here. [Michael: Mm-Hmm, mm-Hmm. What I, what I can say is I’ve sampled with a bunch of people, and I’m pretty sure that some people, when they type, they have no experience at all of their fingers, hands, whatever. And *other* people, when they type, feel the keys on the, on the keyboard as a tactile sensation for them before the footlights of consciousness, they, they *feel* the way the fingers and the keys interact. Some people *do*, some people *don’t*. I don’t have an opinion about whether one’s good or one’s bad, but I’m pretty sure that sometimes it does and sometimes it doesn’t.
- 46:30 And I’m **also** pretty sure that when some people type, they *see* what’s going on, on the screen—experientially, they, they’re sort of watching it happen, watching the words appear—and other people, their eyeballs are aimed at the screen, they’re not not processing what’s on the screen. So if, y’know, the screen went black, they’d notice it, or if they misspelled the word, they’d notice it, or whatever. But they don’t have any experience of that. The experience [coughs] is of, of the words of in men, mentally in some way. I don’t have an opinion about that either, as to which, what, what is good or not. The question is what’s happening. [Michael: Right.] Then beyond that, I would say that a lot of people who say they *hear*, they hear the words

by he, they mean by hear something which is sort of confusing. And so to *hear can mean* I hear in the same way that you're hearing me right now then, and that's in the real world. And your vi, your i, your tympanum or tympani or whatever are vibrating. [Michael: Mm-Hmm.] And you have an experience of, of my talking. And some people experience *themselves* as talking, and the experience is pretty much the same as when I'm talking that the eardrums aren't vibrating probably, but the, the experience is the same. And other people, when they say they, they hear themselves, what they really mean is that there's, they're more *talking* rather than *hearing*. And, and I'm, and that's true when they're, when people are talking in the real world. So most people when they're talking in the real world hear, *could* hear themselves, but most people actually aren't particularly focusing on the hearing. They're in some way planning what they're gonna say or more involved in the *doing* of it, rather than the *listening to* it. Those are two very different things.

48:29 RTH: And so hearing, hearing can be hearing and hearing can be speaking and, and hearing can be just some kind of a sequence of words that doesn't have a, a voice to it at all. And the *voice* can be any of a several different, any of many different things. It could be my voice, it could be some computerized voice, it could be some other voice that I recognize as my voice, but it doesn't sound like my real voice. And y'know, there's, there's a huge varia, there's huge experiential variability that leads people to say, "well, I, I heard, I heard the word *nuh*."

49:05 Michael: Yeah. I, I'm not sure, uh, I have to pay attention to that. Um, it's probably me talking, it's not prominent in my consciousness. It's just to kind of, it's just kind of the way I write. I mean, it's, and it's the way I *read*, too. So, y'know, writing and reading are very closely allied, right? I mean, most of the time we're writing, we're really reading what we just wrote. And, um, and so when I *read*, I also *hear*, and at that moment, am I, am I, am I writing or reading? And I, and I'd be hard pressed to tell you.

49:05 Russ comments: There are quite a few theories about the way the world is in that turn: that writing and reading are allied; that when I read I hear; and so on. DES refers to such beliefs as presuppositions, and a large part of the DES enterprise involves what it calls (loosely following Husserl) the *bracketing* of presuppositions. Bracketing means holding at bay, suspending, putting out of play. Perhaps reading *does* involve hearing; perhaps it *sometimes* involves hearing; perhaps it *rarely* involves hearing; perhaps reading and hearing are independent processes. RTH's job is not to talk Michael into or out of his presuppositions, but rather to help him bracket them—to develop an agnostic viewpoint so that his upcoming experiences can be apprehended without presupposing their characteristics.

49:51 RTH: So I, I have done a, a study about reading. It's a small study. My studies are all fairly small studies. But most of the people in that, in that study would've said, "I hear, I hear my voice when I read." And then when we beep them, they almost never heard their voice when they're reading. [Michael: Interesting.] Uh, a lot of, a lot of people see pictures when they're reading and uh, and the experiences of seeing, of seeing the pictures. And how they got from the words that are out there on the screen to the picture. Well, y'know, there's a lot of neurons that are firing and doing

that kinda stuff, but they're not experienced. What's experienced is the *I'm, I'm seeing the jet fighter* that was [Michael: Right. Yeah.] whatever I was reading about. So I would like us to *wonder*: "Well, I wonder, I wonder what this experience of typing *is*" without having...

49:51 Russ comments: There are a lot of ways that this bracketing skill can be advanced; RTH has chosen one of them—raising an interesting counter example—and then inviting an interest....

50:47 Michael: I don't think it's very physical. I mean, you were, you were saying that about, y'know, feeling your hands. I don't think that's a prominent piece for me, cuz I, I type pretty well and I, I'm, I am, I actually type very quickly, but make a lot of mistakes. So the emphasis is often on watching the screen to make sure I've got it right.

50:47 Russ comments: ... but Michael's response is to add more presuppositional detail. That is, rather than *bracket* his presuppositions, he *elaborates* them. That is part of the nature of presuppositions—they are without question assumed to be true, so it almost always seems quite natural to say more about them. Presuppositions are delusions, and it will take work and effort to abrade them...

51:09 RTH: So I wasn't trying to make this a multiple choice test. I was, what I was trying to, what I was trying to do was to say, let's, what I was trying to do was to pique your curiosity. Really. That's the what I wanted you, what I, what I would like to have happen as the result of this conversation is for you to be genuinely interested. *Well, y'know, I don't, I don't really know. I, I would like that that sounds like that could be interesting.* [Michael: Yeah. Yeah.] That's, that's the object here [Michael: (inaudible)] without, without suggesting that there, that there's an answer that I know. [Michael: Mm-Hmm.] And, and, and, y'know, the, the Socratic method is often said, y'know, the, the teacher knows the answer and he is trying to get the student to say what the answer is. I don't... (A) I don't think that's what Socrates was about. And (B) it's not true for me. I don't know the answer. [Michael: Right.] I'm trying to get us to find out what we find out about. And I, and I would say out of the multiple choice that I, that I gave, I *should* have included at least two more choices in that list. And one is that there, that there was *nothing* going on. And my, my ex, I'm, I'm getting the words, I'm, I'm *creating* the words actually, and they're coming out on my, out my fingertips. When I got no experience at all, that would be fine. *Or* that this question somehow doesn't make sense for me.

51:09 Russ comments: ...This turn was a continuation of the effort to bracket presuppositions.

52:31 Michael: Yeah. I know there are times when I'm typing where I'm thinking about other things, y'know, routine emails, thanks for writing, blah, blah, blah, blah. But this one, I'm thinking hard about the content of it. I'm not distracted. Um, I'm making, y'know, I'm like, I'm trying to be strategic in this email. So my focus is there, as it is in the next beep, which is about the same email, I'm sorry to say.

52:54 RTH: Well, I would say, let's go on to the next beep. We're coming up on an hour already anyway.

SAMPLE 1.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

52:59 Michael: Yeah. You should, we should. Uh, okay. Um, so that one was 11:05, this one was 11:10. Okay. Beep number 4. I'm rereading the same email on the verge of pressing Send. And the beep came and interrupted me. I hadn't pressed Send, um, but I was, I had finished reading it. I was about to press Send. Um, again, I'm like reading, I'm, I'm, I don't always reread my emails. I should, cuz I make a lot of mistakes. But I'm trying to craft it carefully so she will engage and give me more of her thoughts. Um, and I sent, and I'd sent this link to William James. She'd never read William James on the stream of consciousness, which was astonishing. Um, and I had quoted (and this is kind of funny in context of what we're doing), um, the first line of that essay, I dunno if you remember it, is "Now we will begin our study of the mind from within." Beautiful line. Um, and I wrote to myself (this is again, and y'know, after this happened.) "I feel like I'm in a hall of mirrors." [they laugh] So, um, so I'm working in words, obviously, but, but what's going on in my head is imagining how she's gonna read this, y'know, what's her perspective on this? Am I gonna offend her or engage her? And I, and I'm, I'm definitely conjuring her way of thinking. She's very idio,... She's a somewhat idiosyncratic person who is very deliberate in what she says. Um, could get annoyed easily. So I'm, so, so I'm, that's, that's kind of my, my head space as I'm doing this. I've written an email, I'm like trying to read it through her eyes last time through and then about to press. And that it all happened and I was satisfied about to press.

55:11 RTH: So at the moment of the beep, I could hear you saying, my experience is about *Michael* and his satisfaction. *I'm feeling satisfied, so I'm about to press Send.* [Michael: Yeah.] Or I could hear...

55:27 Michael: And the other step was a little earlier.

55:30 RTH: ...and the, and the other step was earlier. Or it could be that there's still something of, I'm conjuring up this, this other person and I'm still looking at it and maybe *she's* instructing me to press Send or something like that. Or there's nothing. It's just that, that it's automatic. I'm, I'm done with that and I'm reaching towards the Send button and uh,

55:52 Michael: No, because I have those, I still that, that, that care. And I, I send a lot of careless email, but the, the, the sense of care I had, and the reason that that space opened up to be interrupted by your beeper was because I'm being careful on this, in this email. So I have, so in my head is, is that, um, y'know, second thought, anticipating her thought, making sure I didn't say anything wrong, ready to go.

56:23 RTH: And, and of that, what, what is present at the moment of the beep? So what you, what you just said,

56:34 Michael: Well, you used the word *satisfaction*. It's okay to press, it's okay to press the [inaudible]. [RTH: So ready to go.] I had said I had sort of li, I had licensed myself to go ahead and press the beep and then, I mean press the button, [RTH: The Send button.] the Send button. And, and uh, and that's when I heard the beep. And I, and, but I hadn't quite pressed it cuz, cuz then I stopped and wrote down what was happening. And, uh,

56:56 RTH: So the, so the experience at the moment of the beep *does* sound like it's more about *Michael* and his sense [Michael: Probably. Yeah.] of action, ready, readiness, than about the person.

57:05 Michael: But I wouldn't normally have a sense of satisfaction about finishing an email if it had been a simpler email. So it was that sense of satisfaction reflected the fact that there'd been this careful process.

57:19 RTH: Yes, I understand that.

57:21 Michael: So it's kind of, it, it's kind of, it's got some baggage, right.

57:26 RTH: Satisfaction coming, having come from

57:30 Michael: Having to work out this, y'know, little bit of anticipating her, her mind reading it through her eyes. I mean, y'know, that that was the last read. It's like, *how's she gonna read this?* Um, so that I was satisfied was I had subjected it to that test.

57:49 RTH: Okay. So what, what this conversation inspires me to say is that the a a moment of experience, [coughs] a moment of experience is not (in my, in my head), is not necessarily a very short amount of time. Time is not really what the experience is about. So if the experience is readiness, I'm ready, I'm ready to send, readiness. If that's what, if that's what the experience is, that could be a second or a couple seconds. *And* that, and that experience doesn't have to be a discrete thing. Like I thought about it from her point of view. Done with that. Now I'm ready to send. Yeah. Yeah. It's the, I thought about that, that sort of tapering off. Am I ready to send, that's sort of, those things can taper into and out of, out of each other.

58:43 Michael: And something as simple as satisfaction can be inflected by, right, some kind of emotion. Like, *I think I got this* or, y'know, well, *we'll see how she reacts*. I mean, y'know, there's a couple different emotional coloration you could bring to that.

59:00 RTH: You *could*, and the question is, did you... [Michael: What did I?] That's right.

59:04 Michael: Yeah. Um, and,

59:06 RTH: And I'm, and I'd be interested in that, y'know, so if, if this is, is this a, a worried send or a satisfied send or a um,

59:15 Michael: No, I, I, I basically thought I, I think I've, I think I've hit this right. I think that I've sent an email that'll engage her.

59:28 RTH: And what, what I, what I meant by what I think I was misleading and what I just said is what I, what I *meant* to say was that if there is some coloration, then I would be interested in that coloration, too. I wasn't trying to ask particularly whether there was a coloration.

59:48 Michael: Yeah, no, I understand. I understand.

CONVERSATION AFTER THE SAMPLES

59:53 RTH: So I would say we've probably talked about enough beeps. Uh, I think I [Michael laughs] I think ...

59:59 Michael: Yeah! It's tiring!

59:59 RTH: It *is* tiring. [Michael: Yeah.] And, and there's some, there, there, I think there's two reasons why it's not a good idea to keep going. One is, I, I think we have adequately or pretty skillfully, adequately, whatever conveyed that we're, *we're interested and don't know*. And, and if we talk about more beeps, we are more likely to be reifying things that we don't know than we are [laughs] And, uh, so I would, I would rather have a stop in a suspended-animation kind of way than to try to guess. *And* I would also, I also think it's a good idea to not tire ourselves out too far.

1:00:47 Michael: Yeah. Do you have any advice for my next round?

1:00:52 RTH: I don't think I'm capable of giving you advice. I

1:00:56 Michael: Do, do you, do you agree it might be a good idea to do a day or a day part where I'm not at my computer?

1:01:04 RTH: Yes. [Michael: Okay.] But I, I don't agree with that strong enough that I would *instruct* you to say, why don't you do it [Michael: Right.] at some place other than your computer.

1:01:12 Michael: Okay. So you let your, as subjects basically choose which part of the day that they're gonna carry the beeper.

1:01:21 RTH: As, as in, in the first draft of, of the answer to that, the answer would be Yes. [Michael: Okay.] What I, what I **want** is the subject. I want *Michael* to be interested in what his experience is. And, and I want Michael to approach that in a, what I would call a sort of a scientific way, which would, which would be, well, he knows something about his experience and he knows something about his life and, and *he knows* more than I do. When would be maybe a good time to wear the beeper. [Michael: Mm-Hmm.] And so I would, I want him to do that.

1:01:57 Michael: Okay. If it,

1:01:58 RTH: If it were to come to pass that on the fourth sampling day, we, we had nothing but beeps while we were on the, on the computer, *and*, and it seemed that we had figured out what those experiences were like, which so far we haven't. I mean, [Michael: Right.] Then, then I might suggest at that time, y'know, might be interesting to try to where the beep or some other place. But,

1:02:20 Michael: So you're definitely gonna catch more, uh, emailing [laughs] desk work. Right. Um, should we schedule our next session?

1:02:29 RTH: Yes, I think we should.

1:02:29 Russ comments: They compare calendars.

1:03:54 Michael: Be sure.

1:03:55 RTH: Okay. And do you have any questions that, that we haven't covered on...?

1:04:02 Michael: I don't think so. I don't think so. I mean, you've, I mean, I've gotten a sense of how, uh, how challenging it is to get this right. And, uh, and that discrete moments of experience are just very hard to isolate. Um,

1:04:18 RTH: Well, I would, I would *recommend* that you jot down some notes about that, about your experience of that. [Michael: Oh, I'll for sure.] By the time we get to the third or fourth sampling that you might feel differently about it. [Michael: Yeah.] And it will be difficult to reconstruct.

1:04:32 Michael: I know, I know. Yeah. No, I, I'll take extensive notes.

1:04:38 RTH: Alrighty. And I

1:04:39 Michael: Thank you, Russ. Thank you very much for your time.

1:04:41 RTH: And I will send you, so I will,

1:04:44 Michael: The recording.

1:04:44 RTH: I will send you a recording. I don't remember what I sent you last time. Did I, I did send you a, send you a recording. Did I put a clock on it and that stuff kind of stuff? I forget. But no, I probably will put a clock on this just so if we want to talk back, we can talk about it. We can sit,

1:05:00 Michael: Find this spot. Okay.

1:05:02 RTH: 14 minutes into the interview or whatever. We...

1:05:04 Michael: That'd be great. Excellent.

1:05:07 RTH: And, but that takes me a little bit of time to do it, so it'll

1:05:09 Michael: Be okay. No rush. No rush. All right. All right, Russ. Thank you very much.

1:05:13 RTH: See you on Friday. Thank you.

1:05:15 Michael: Take care. See you.