

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY

Olivia: A Podcast Journalist

Olivia Interview 5

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the May 10 interview with Olivia that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/wPXktTYFGkg>. In green are comments about and explanations of the Descriptive Experience Sampling process. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt

Olivia = Olivia R.

0:01 RTH: You sound like you still have a cold or allergies or...?

0:03 Olivia: Oh, I'm, I'm sick. Yeah. I haven't been this sick in a couple of years and I, um, it's amazing. Yeah, it's just, I mean, I, yeah, so it's, I've, it's not COVID. It's just a terrible, terrible head and chest cold, but it's um, yeah, it's been pretty unfortunate. I've been in bed for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and I got up today. I actually went out and saw a doctor and had another PCR test and came home and sat in front of my computer, um, for a few hours. And I'm now on the couch because I didn't feel like I could sit upright [laughs] anymore. And sorry, it's just started pouring here as well. So, um, I dunno if you can hear that, but yes.

0:45 RTH: I cannot hear it. I can see your window. It actually, actually looks like a bright, sunny day out there, but, uh, in the.

0:50 Olivia: Ah, well, it's kinda yeah, bright, but no, it's raining. It's a lot of rain.

0:54 RTH: Yeah. It's, it's cloudy here and the sun is going down cuz it's evening time, and uh, and I've got allergies. This is spring, spring fever in this part of the world and.

1:06 Olivia: Uh, oh yeah. Well we're just getting the beginning of the flu season here. So, uh, [RTH: Yeah.] Yep.

1:14 RTH: So this is gonna be our, our fifth crack at this. Is that?

1:18 Olivia: Is that right? Is that where we're up to, fifth time?

1:21 RTH: I'm not a hundred percent sure, [Olivia: Probably.] But I think...

1:24 Olivia: ...This notebook, so there's 1, 2, 3, 4, yep. This is no, no, no, this is just 4.

1:24 Russ comments: It is really day 5.

1:35 RTH: Just 4. This is 4th. [Olivia: Yeah.] Okay. And, and do you have comments or questions or whatever about this, and, uh?

- 1:49 Olivia: Well I was thinking about, I was reviewing my beeps feeling disappointed by them because I find none of them to be particularly interesting. Um, and I find, so this, this device is, I know it is quite small, but it's not, it's I find it. I think if, if it were less, um, clunky and the whole mechanism were a bit easier, I would probably be capturing more beeps and better beeps if it was easier to sort of have on. And, um, yeah, I don't know, like even if there was a way that you could hack the iPhone. Cuz I'm quite happy wearing these [gestures to her wireless earbuds] for long periods of time, and don't find them, whereas there one with the cord, it's all, y'know, it's a long cord and I find it keeps getting tangled and often, y'know, being a woman, I'm not wearing a pants with a belt that make this easy to kinda, um. And so yeah, it can be a bit obtrusive. And so then I'm, y'know, I'm only really wearing it at home. And whereas I think if you could hack the iPhone to deliver the random beeps through the EarPods, that would facilitate me wearing it more and in different situations.
- 3:06 RTH: So I, iPhone, Apple makes that difficult. [Olivia: Yeah.] I have an, I have an app, which I don't think is very good actually, but it's, it's as, it's as good as there is out there. [Olivia: Yeah.] If I, if, if we really wanted to do it without wear, without using the regular beeper, the, the best way that I find hacking, by hacking the iPhone, as you saw, call it, is to, you can, is to use the alarm [Olivia: Alright.] and actually physically program in alarms. So what I generally do is, is to ask you to have your partner, I, I set up a schedule of, of alarm times or whatever, and have your, your partner or somebody else put those times in so you don't know when the times are gonna be. And then...
- 3:45 Olivia: ...Oh, that's a good idea...
- 3:46 RTH: ...And then I give you a recording of a 700 Hertz beep like the, like the, the, the DES beeper beep. [Olivia: Yeah.] And you put that in, like, it was a song, as if you were going to, so there's a fair amount of work that is involved.
- 4:03 Olivia: Yeah.
- 4:03 RTH: And the, the advantage of that is that you can play it across your, your, uh, uh, EarPods. [Olivia: Yeah.] But the disadvantage is that ear, well, it depends on the ear, EarPods, but, but a lot of Bluetooth stuff doesn't, doesn't happen immediately. So the, the, so I don't use it for example, in this interview right now, I don't in, in the kind of interviewing that I do. I don't like to use the, I have, I have wireless Bluetooth ear, EarPods, and I don't use them because I miss the beginning of every sentence, the. [Olivia: Oh yeah, yeah.] When, when it goes back, when it goes back and forth and I, and that disturbs me, I like to hear the whole thing, I guess. And, uh, and so I prefer a wired earphone.
- 4:50 Olivia: Yeah. [RTH: But.] Yeah, the Bluetooth can be, yeah, a little bit [inaudible].
- 4:55 RTH: And, and it is the case that I, it is po, it would be possible for me to make the whole device. The whole beeper is a really simple thing. And it could be, if I had the money in the, in the, whatever I could buy, I could tell somebody to make me something that looks like your EarPod, [Olivia: Yeah.] and all it is is a beeper.

- 5:12 Olivia: And that's it. Yeah. Yeah. So they'd be, you wouldn't need anything [RTH: You wouldn't need.] being heavy like this.
- 5:17 RTH: Yeah. And that could be done. I have, I've not done it, but it could be nowadays.
- 5:22 Olivia: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm sure. I'm sure.
- 5:29 RTH: Y'know, there's a lot of things that you could do, can't do it all.
- 5:33 Olivia: With limitless resources. Yes. That's true. [RTH: Yeah.] How often are you doing these, um, like these sessions and how many different subjects and that kinda thing?
- 5:46 RTH: Well, it depends on, it depends on how you count. I, I think in terms of what I've been putting on the web, I think you're the fourth, fourth one, and I've got two more going.
- 5:55 Olivia: Mm hmm.
- 5:56 RTH: So, and, and that might be enough of that exercise. I haven't, haven't exactly, haven't exactly figured out what to do about that. So the, I, I have a new wrinkle on these that I haven't actually, haven't actually made public yet. But in the, in the, when the, one of the two beeps, that one of the two people that I haven't yet put on the web, I've been doing co-interviewing with an interviewer who's uh, and then, and then he, he and I, uh, and so he and I have been doing like a masterclass of let's take apart what happened in this, in this interview. [Olivia: Mm hmm.] And what, why you, why you said this, and what do you think she meant when she said that, and that kinda stuff. And I think there's, I think that's a, for somebody who's seriously interested in finding out about inner experience, I think that might be a very useful thing. We'll see, because it... Y'know, I can, I have written uh quite a few books now about how to, how to do this and quite a few papers about how to do it. But it's one thing to talk in the abstract about how to do it. And it's quite another thing to say, well, this is what happened. Everybody has seen what happened. Everybody was there. We'll show this video. And let's talk about that, that particular moment where everybody's been immersed in it.
- 7:19 Olivia: Yeah, right.
- 7:19 RTH: So sort of like a masterclass I'm, I'm a, I'm a serious classical guitarist and I, so I, I attend guitar master classes or whatever, and, and that's the, sort of the way those things work. For professional musician masterclasses, the world class musician comes in and a student plays, and then the, the virtuoso and the student have a conversation about what happened.
- 7:43 Olivia: Yeah, right.
- 7:44 RTH: And, And I, and I think those are informative conversations in many ways, different, different from the, well, y'know what I think about retrospection and generalization, in general and, and that's a lot of what those things are about. But they're, but they do give you some insight into what the, what the skilled musician is listening for, listening to.

8:14 Olivia: Yeah. So, but it sounds like you are more focused now on teaching other people how to do it rather than collecting the data and analyzing it yourself.

8:27 RTH: I think that's true. But, but, but I, but I don't think that's anything new for me. I think I've, I think that's, I've always been like that.

8:33 Olivia: Right.

8:35 RTH: I've, I've, I've always been of the teach-somebody-how-to-fish rather than fish.

8:40 Olivia: Yeah. Do you, um, have you, y'know, in the part, cuz you've been doing this for years, right? You've been doing these?

8:51 RTH: 50 ish, 40 ish, 50.

8:53 Olivia: How often are you surprised by what you hear in an interview with someone these days?

9:02 RTH: Well, that depends on how you define surprise, but pretty often, the.

9:06 Olivia: Oh, really?

9:12 RTH: Yeah. It depends on how you define surprise. I, I'm no longer dramatically surprised, I suppose, because I've seen quite a few stuff and so most, most everything I've seen something more or less similar to it. But you, but I'm, y'know, I, I think I'm remarkably *not good* at predicting what I'm going to hear. And so in that respect, I'm always surprised.

9:39 Olivia: You haven't, um, revised your categories of inner experience though?

9:45 RTH: I haven't revised my categories for a long time. I think those, those categories have held up pretty well. I, I, I *worry* about the categories because I think people tend to, once they have categories tend to *categorize*. And I think that's, uh, probably not a healthy thing for humans to do most of the time. Because I think most inner experience really falls between the categories. Every now and then you see an absolutely perfect textbook example of inner speaking, and every now and then you see an absolutely perfect textbook example of unsymbolized thinking, but much at a time, things are sort of murky or.

10:27 Olivia: I'm just gonna mute myself while I blow my very blocked nose one moment.

11:25 RTH: Well, shall we look at beeps and see what we got?

11:27 Olivia: Let's get into it. Yeah.

11:34 RTH: Number 1.

SAMPLE 5.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 11:35 Olivia: Number 1. So I was typing a text message, um, um, on my computer. Uh, and what I've written is thinking the words. Uh, thinking is a vague, a vague word, isn't it? [RTH: Yes, it is.] Um [laughs] but I think, uh, yeah, so there's actually been, there's quite a few of that, well there's a couple of these that are, beeped me mid composing a text message. So it's yesterday afternoon when I was in bed, mostly, y'know, sort of trying to do some work on my computer and mostly just texting with people cuz that was all my addled sick brain could manage. [RTH: Right.] Um, do I hear the words or do I just exper, I mean, I think I hear the words. I think I hear the words in my voice. I think I hear my voice producing the words. And then the other note that I have for this beep is feeling, um, my very blocked nose and my sore lower back. So I've been very aware and this is kind of a feature of all of these beeps of being extremely congested, um, which has been, y'know, I've been unable to breathe through my nose and I find, I've found my attention and um, thoughts quite focused, or not focused, but very aware of that at all, y'know. When I've been writing the beeps, I've been aware that I've been aware [laughs] of, of that.
- 13:23 RTH: And so at the, were you aware of this at the moment of the beep, talking about chest congestion and nasal congestion or whatever, so?
- 13:31 Olivia: Yeah, the notes that I've written is feeling my very blocked nose and sore lower back, so yeah. Feel, feeling them. Um.
- 13:41 RTH: And, and, and the question that I'm asking here is, is that feeling them at the moment of the beep? So if the, so I'm understanding that your nose is blocked, and your back is sore, whatever, but, but it doesn't necessarily mean that at any particular moment that you're *feeling* that stuff. The question is [Olivia: Mm.] at the, at the moment of the beep, were you *feeling* that, or was that a characteristic of the world, my nose is blocked?
- 14:08 Olivia: No, I think it's, I mean, I've, I've found it to be very, um, like, like my attention has been on it.
- 14:18 RTH: Okay.
- 14:18 Olivia: Um
- 14:21 RTH: So I'm not trying to talk, I'm not trying to talk you out of it. I just wanna make sure that, that we understand what we're saying here.
- 14:28 Olivia: Yeah. And there's a lot of, um, y'know, it's almost like if there's a sound that goes with the feeling of, um, being aware of my unpleasant physical, y'know, nasal state, it's, "uhhh", it's a lot of that. Like I think I'm just feeling a lot of, "uhhh".
- 14:54 RTH: And, and so are, are you using that as a metaphor that, that I, I feel that if I were gonna put it into words or sounds that I'd go, "uhhh", but.

15:03 Olivia: Uh. [laughs]

15:04 RTH: Or, or are you actually in...

15:06 Olivia: ...Or I mean literal...

15:06 RTH: ...some way emitting and, “uhhh” something, at the moment of the beep?

15:13 Olivia: Um, look, I think I’m not emitting that at the moment of the beep, but definitely it’s a sound that I’ve made both physically real in a real way and an internal way, many times over the past few days, just a lot of uhhh.

15:29 RTH: So I, I, I can empathize with that sound. I mean, that’s not a foreign sound or feeling or whatever to me. But the question, the, the question that I’m interested, one of the questions that I’m interested in, is, maybe a *primary* one is, is that part of your direct experience *at the moment of the beep*?

15:50 Olivia: The sound, no, look, not at the moment of this beep. Um, no, but, but the, the *feeling* of the congestion and the sore back is in my, y’know, in my consciousness at the moment of the beep.

16:05 RTH: Okay. And wha, and so how, what does that feel like?

16:10 Olivia: Uh, well, I think it’s just, y’know, I’m, I’m feeling this strong, physical, these physical sensations, and I’m really, um, y’know, like I’m paying attention to them, like they’re very much in my, y’know, whereas I think before we’ve talked about, well, what is my physical setting for many of the beeps, and I’ve sort of said, oh, well, I’m, I’ve never, y’know, like, I’m very rarely thinking about, um, what’s around me and how I’m feeling. This has been very front of mind in, in all of the beeps, these physical sensations in my kind of face and chest, um, that have just been, been very intrusive in a way that my physical state rarely is when I’m not sick.

17:02 RTH: Okay. So at one point, I think you described this as nose blocked, in which case it would, might seem like I’m focusing on my nose [points to nose]. And in another, like this last time you just said it was like my head and chest and nose [gestures globally around head and chest]. And in which case I’m focused on?

17:22 Olivia: It’s, it feels like I’m focused on [points specifically to a region from nose to throat] the whole part of me from like, from behind my nose. It’s a very, I mean, I could locate, I feel like I can locate it cuz it’s sort of like, it just feels like everything behind from my nose to here is full of snot. And I’m, it’s almost like, I mean, I’m not saying this because I, I don’t have a visual, but there’s just a feeling of that whole area behind, *in*, being completely blocked off or stuffed up.

17:52 RTH: Okay. And, and I *feel* that. I’m not *inferring* that. I’m, I’m, I’m experiencing block, blocked up snottiness, in here? [Olivia: Yeah.] Sort of in the, in the core of my head? [Olivia: Yeah.] And, and neck or something like that? Is that, is that right? [Olivia: Yup.] And so it, so it’s not like I feel it on my cheek surfaces [points below eyes], like

sometimes a sinus thing is, is up, is here, but in this particular beep it's not that? [Olivia: Yeah.] Is that right?

18:21 Olivia: That's right. Yeah. It's not surface, it's not like a scratch or a yeah, a surface-level sinus thing. It's very in.

18:28 RTH: Okay. And, and, and it goes down into here, but not throughout your chest, is that right?

18:37 Olivia: Nope.

18:37 RTH: Okay.

18:38 Olivia: Although I, I did also write, cuz yesterday I was feeling very sore around my lower back. Uh, I think was like, um, muck from having coughed a lot that I was, like my sort of abdomen. And I was, y'know, like I, y'know, when you've got like a low-level ongoing ache. Y'know, you can't, you can't ignore it, it's, it's there, it won't, you can't, it won't *leave* your consciousness.

19:06 RTH: Well, I, I would say let's set that, let's set that aside. Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't, because I've, I've sampled with quite a few people who have what they would call chronic pain and I'm, *I'm always in pain*, and yet at many beeps they're *not*.

19:21 Olivia: Yeah, right.

19:22 RTH: And it's, what's tricky about pain in particular, and achiness, maybe even the, even *most*, is that it seems like it's there all the time, that a characteristic of it is that it's, it's there all the time. And, and certainly whenever I notice it it's there. So like when the refrigerator light's on, y'know, it seems like the refrigerator light's on all the time. Because the, every time I see it, it's on. And, uh, but that doesn't mean that in my experience, I feel lower back pain all the time. And, so the question is at this particular beep?

20:00 Olivia: Well, at this part, I mean, I've written it there. So I feel like, at this particular beep I was feeling it.

20:11 RTH: That's, that's so, sounds like *I can't remember for sure directly, but I've written it down and therefore it must be true*. Is that? [Olivia: Yeah.] Is that how that translates?

20:11 Russ comments: Olivia has explicitly referred to *what she wrote* on four occasions in this sample: 11:35 "what I've written is," 13:31 "the notes that I've written is," 18:38 "I did also write," and 20:00 "I've written it there." She used similar locutions frequently on previous sampling days (for example, on day 4 see 7:41, 13:25, 20:25, 21:19, 39:49 45:53). Most DES participants (particularly after several days of sampling) do not explicitly mention their notes. They frequently *look at* their notes, but then *describe their experience* as if the glance at the notes refreshed their memory and now they can recall their beeped experience.

The DES object is *not* to try to interpret the participant's words, but rather to (try to) help the participant to describe in such a way that interpretation is not

necessary (or minimally necessary). So here, RTH is trying to understand what Olivia is conveying by referring explicitly to her notes.

20:22 Olivia: So, yeah.

20:27 RTH: Okay. So I, it's been a while since we've sampled and, and I haven't, I have *not* gone back and looked at the beeps that we have had since the last time, since the last time we sampled, which is a month or so, maybe longer than that ago. [pause] And I, I, I was gonna make a point about that, but I don't actually remember what it was now. The...

20:27 Russ comments: It was exactly a month ago.

20:53 Olivia: [laughs]

20:57 RTH: What, what, I guess what I would say is that it sounds sort of familiar to me when, when you're, when, when, as in this moment you're saying, *well, I can't remember, but since I wrote it down, it must be true*. I would say that most of the people that I sample with claim to be able to remember things and they're...

21:17 Olivia: You believe them?

21:18 RTH: I do actually, because, because of the way the procedure works. So we're, we're, and, and I may be wrong about this, but, and, and, and some of the, some of the people that I work with may be wrong about it. But the, the, the, the procedure, as a general rule, narrows down, so that we're only have to remember a small thing. [Olivia: Mm.] *And we're gonna pay attention to it right after it happens and take down some notes about it, so we're gonna, we're gonna spec, specific, uh, we're gonna make specific this particular, we're gonna specify this particular moment. And, uh, and then most people, most people say, well, I can remember what it is and I wrote down some, I wrote down some notes about that.* And sometimes, sometimes the notes contradict what they wrote down, but.

22:09 Olivia: So what do you believe then? Wait, you're saying sometimes the notes contradict their memory?

22:14 RTH: Right.

22:14 Olivia: And so you believe their memory over the notes?

22:21 RTH: No. What, that, that, what that poses a problem for me. And so, so I'm, I accept that every, I believe that memory is always reconstructive. [Olivia: Mm hmm.] So every, every time it seems like I remember something I'm really making it up from scratch, *now*. I think that's the way memory works.

22:21 Russ comments: RTH said "memory is always reconstructive." It would be better for him to have said "memory is always constructive" to emphasize that each instance of *memory* is a construction in the present of an event that is said to be in the past.

22:41 Olivia: Mm hmm.

22:44 RTH: But I also think that there are sort of different gradations about that. There are some things that are more constrained to events that happened, and some things that are less constrained. And so some memory is more, more tightly, um, tightly memorized, I guess you would say, tightly *recalled*, and some is less likely recalled. And, and I think I'm pretty consistent in saying, well, I'm, I, I'm, I want us to do the best we can to stay constrained to the moment of the beep, and I want you to do it the, the best way that you can do it. And I'm, I'm willing to agree that there's differences, individual differences there. So you might be able to do it this way, and somebody else might be able to do it the other way. And I, and I don't prefer one to the other because I think people are, are, [Olivia coughs] people are, are different from each other. But I, well, well, I guess what I would, what I would say is that there are some people who *say*, as you have a couple of times here, "well, what I wrote down is this." And when people *say* that, it seems like they're, what they mean by that is "I can't actually remember what happened, but what I wrote down was this."

24:19 Olivia: Yeah! I mean, that's, uh yeah. And, but I trust my, cuz I trust, I personally trust my notes more than I trust my memory. And it's funny that you say most people don't have a hard time remembering, cuz it's such a specific moment, but it's a tiny moment and it's, uh, y'know, there's often, and as I said, sort of when I'm doing it, I'm at home, there's often lots going on. Um, and it's completely inconsequential moment. So to, y'know, bank on a, like there's no other than the fact that there's a beep, there's nothing else that distinguishes that moment from, um, y'know, the, the moments that came before it, or after it, in that I'm at home doing a pretty mundane thing. So, y'know, is, is the beep enough to, to cement it, to isolate it in my memory? No, I don't think so. I think what, y'know, the note is what, what cements it in my memory. Um.

25:33 RTH: So, so I think if we went back and looked at the, at the transcripts, that we had a conversation about this once, or maybe more than once before and, and Alek was a part of that con, con, conversation and Alek. I think my, in my recollection, I asked Alek, well, you sampled a year ago, can you remember some of the beeps. And she rattled off a few beeps, I think: this is, these are the samples that I had. So *she* would say, "I can remember those things." [Olivia: Yeah.] And, and when she sampled, *she* would say, uh, "there's no question about it *for me*, the, I think..."

26:09 Olivia: ...Yeah, but even now I can remember some beeps from our, y'know, sessions that were months ago. I can remember the one where I was writing the "X-A-N XANTHE"—I can remember that one. I can remember. Um, but, but can I remember the beep or can I remember our conversation about the beep? I mean, I would say, I think what I remember is our conversation about the beep *primarily*, and that conversation sort of conjures a vague, a, a memory about, um, the moment, uhh, about that may be reconstructed from the conversation.

26:46 RTH: So I, I would translate that into saying, well, I have, I have a memory, I have a memory of the Z-A-N, X-A-N, X-A-NTHE writing, but I'm not sure whether that memory is of the, of the thing, of the thing. So it's, it's not like I don't have memory, it's that I don't, I don't know exactly what to, what that memory is of.

27:08 Olivia: Well, I remember where I was sitting and I can visualize where I was sitting in the, like I can sort of conjure the memory of that one. And if I went and looked back in the notes, I probably could recreate the memory of others.

27:24 RTH: So the, so the, the, what, the thing that is of vital importance to me and of interest to me, I, I guess I would say, is, there are those people who *say* more or less like you have said, frequently throughout the, the sampling, “well, this is what I wrote down.” And, and then there are other people like I’ve characterized Alek who would say, “well, y’know, doesn’t matter what I wrote down, that this is what I did. I can look at what I wrote down, but I can remember.” So the question is, are, *are those people’s experience different?* [Olivia: Or is...] That’s really, what’s at stake here.

28:00 Olivia: Is, are there experience different or, or is their *level of confidence* just different?

28:05 RTH: Exactly! So that’s the, that, that is, that is what is at stake. And, and my, I, I, I think I’m as, uh, skeptical as they come. I’m, I’m a skeptical guy. So I’m, I wanna keep these issues alive, front and center for me all the time. So I, I have come to believe, after 50 years, that it’s, that it, that it’s likely that the experience is different. That the experience of someone...

28:44 Olivia: ...The experience of, but when you say the experience is different, do you mean the experience of remembering? [RTH: No, I mean...] Or the experience of?

28:52 RTH: The experience at the moment of the beep, is what I think.

28:54 Olivia: Yeah. Yeah. Y’know, I guess the other thing reflecting on now having done this a bunch of times is, um. Another thi, something that I found regularly was, I think I’ve described it before in our sessions as feeling ambushed by the beep, but, um, really having to stop and think, what was I thinking just now, and often the way I would access that would was what was I doing, And then, y’know, um.

29:38 RTH: So I, I *think* all of that is tied up in your way of experiencing. And so it could, and it, and it could be that, that it’s your auditory system that is different from Alek’s. (I don’t, I don’t wanna, I wanna personalize this, but, but not to make too much of it. But it’s easier to say, y’know, Olivia does this, Alek does that, but, uh, and it may or may not be true, but the.) But it could be that Olivia has an auditory system that doesn’t process the beep clearly and so, puts the, has the beep come sort of gradually [gestures gradual ramp] into awareness. Whereas Alek has an auditory system where the beep happens [gestures an abrupt blip] and she knows exactly [snaps fingers] when the beep is. And that would, would result, could result in, Alek would know exactly what the experience was and Olivia wouldn’t, because for Olivia, we’re talking about a time... And I’m, I’m sure that’s true for some people actually I’m pretty, well, I’m sure is too strong, but. I’m, I’m pretty sure I’ve sampled with some people whose auditory processing is very different from the average guy’s auditory processing.

30:57 Olivia: I think that’s really interesting because, um, I, so.... I am the kinda person that is unable to, um, tune out sounds, right. So I find it very different to try and work or read, um, in a

situation where there is sound around me that is, classical music I can do, but if there's a conversation happening here, um, or music with words, um, I find it very hard to tune out. So, and I wonder if this in a way that, so I noticed my partner for example, is someone who can sit there and read a book with all kinds of chaos going on around him. Um, who can, y'know, theoretically or who can, according to him, not hear when someone's talking to him, if he's engrossed in something in a way that I can never not hear, even if I'm extremely engrossed in something I can always hear when someone says something or asks me a question or asks a question like, um. Which is obviously the same system, it's not the same um. But, but anyway, so I guess I'm just surprised to consider that a, or maybe it's not surprising considering that, but, um, that cuz in some ways I, when I hear you say that your auditory processing system doesn't sort of, y'know, processes the beep, perhaps more slowly, less immediately. It doesn't, um, it seems to be opposite to what I think of my generally about my auditory processing system, where I'm quite sensitive to and um, to sounds and responsive, to sounds.

32:56 RTH: So I, I, I think that's quite possible. So I, I, I, I *didn't* mean to be saying th, *this is the way Olivia's system is*. I was trying to say, this is how one could end up with different, different, different ways of responding to the beep different ways of, of being in the interviews with me. I wasn't trying to say that that was it for you. So what you have just *said* is more in line with, I think there are some people who, who make very clear figural, experiential figures and everything else is really a long way back in the ground. Like maybe your partner as you're talking about, so he, he's into one thing at a time. And that one thing is it. And the rest of the world doesn't exist as far as he's concerned. I'm sure there are people like that. And I think there are other people whose, whose experiential field, whatever that is, is more diffuse. And so, [Olivia: Yeah.] and so the boundaries between what's central and what's not is, is gray rather than *there* and *not there*, which is the way it is for some people. [Olivia: Yeah.] So mo I, I would say many people, they're, they're when, when the beep goes off, they're just a hundred percent clear about what's happening. There's, there's no.... [Olivia: Yeah.] It was *this* and it wasn't *that*. [Olivia: Yeah.] And you can try to talk 'em into it and twist their arm, or you can do whatever it is that, uh, those guys, you're not gonna.... And then there are other people that that's just not true. [Olivia: Yes.] And I think that is, I, I think the philosophers as a group would, would like to say, well, that's, y'know, that's a characteristic of the language and people are, y'know, people use words in a different way or whatever. I think that's not true, I think it's, it's the experiential substrate. And then maybe they learn to use words differently because their experience is different.

34:47 Olivia: Yeah. Yeah. Which would, y'know, to further illustrate the differences cuz it's, I feel like just comparing myself and my partner, the way you described, y'know, his experience is that, and that's it and the rest of the world might not exist. And I, another way that I find this manifests is that, so I'm the kind of person that, y'know, if I'm coming down into the kitchen to both make a cup of tea and put the dinner on or, like, I will, I'm just like, okay, well I'll put the water onto boil while I do this. And y'know, and it's all about getting everything going, y'know, at the same time to, and maybe you just call it impatience as well, but it's like minimizing the waiting because if I start the water before I go to the bathroom, y'know, then it's, it's heating while I'm in the bathroom, and then I come back and it's already almost boiled. Um, and then I'll make the tea while I'm, y'know, whereas I would say my partner will come downstairs and go, all right, well, I

need to go to the bathroom. I'm gonna do that first. And then I'm gonna make the tea, I'm gonna put the this on. And, um, and, and everything happens quite sequentially whereas I find I'm actually trying to do about seven different things at once.

35:59 RTH: And, and I, I'm not wishing to say whether that's accurate or inaccurate about your partner or about you, but I think there are people who are like that. And I think that that reflects their inner experience. I don't think it's just external behavior that's different, I think.

36:14 Olivia: Yeah, [RTH: I think, but...] Yeah. And I'm sort of paying attention equally to all the, the different things that are happening.

36:22 RTH: Right. And, and, and I am not, I, I'm pretty sure actually that it's not wise to say one of those things is better than the other, I think.

36:33 Olivia: No, I think each has their own advantages...

36:37 RTH: ...And, [Olivia:...and disadvantages....] and, and ways they can get you get you into trouble.

36:41 Olivia: Yeah.

36:43 RTH: So I'm, I'm, it's not a, I'm not making a value judgment. I'm well, what I, what I'm what this is, this is really what I'm saying: I think inner, I think inner experience takes place. I'm sure that it depends on whether you use an earphone or whether you use a retrospective device or whatever. And, and I think that, I think there are great, *huge* individual differences. And I think for *some people* it's vitally important. For others that might not make much difference, but like the Fran story that I think I've told you about. The, y'know, coming to terms with her inner experience was a *miraculous* thing for her. And, uh, and for other, for others, it might not be. But, so I, I'd say, look, we should go on to beep number 2 here. And, uh.

36:43 Russ comments: To recapitulate: Some DES participants say "I wrote down..." and some don't. We have advanced at least three potential explanations: (1) it is an inconsequential accident of language—everyone's inner experience is the same, but some people happen to say "I wrote down" and others don't say it; (2) it is an artifact of the sampling method—everyone's inner experience is the same, but different people's auditory systems process the beep in different ways, resulting in more or less precise glimpses of that inner experience—a slower, broader auditory processing system may result in broader so-called apprehension of inner experience; and (3) people's inner experience is different—some people's inner experience is easier to recall (for example, it is simpler, or it has a more distinct figure), whereas other people's inner experience is more difficult to recall (for example, is more complex, or more diffuse).

It's a fundamentally important question, and we have not reached a conclusion about which of those (or perhaps some other) characterizes Olivia's experience.

SAMPLE 5.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

37:42 Olivia: Yeah, let's do. So look, beep number 2, which happened only like y'know a few minutes later, I was kinda, um. Oh God, sorry. My mother is just calling me in many on, on really different platforms. Um, let me just quickly send her a text back to say, I'll call her back. Um, so read this. Can I call you in 30 minutes? Okay. Um, so it was a, it was very similar. I was sort of engaging in the same text conversation. So I was in the middle of composing a text. Um, I've written the same as above hearing myself say the word "Novid," because I was telling someone I've been in bed for three days with Novid, y'know, not COVID, Novid, a lot of colds going around, people are talking about Novid. Um, that's it.

38:47 RTH: So hearing myself say the word "Novid."

38:51 Olivia: Yeah.

38:52 RTH: Can you tell me what hearing myself, what do you mean by "hearing myself say"?

38:58 Olivia: Um, well. [pause]

39:04 RTH: Let me, let me ask a, a simpler question. At the moment of this beep, are you confident that the word "Novid" was somehow in your inner experience?

39:12 Olivia: Yeah, because at the moment of the beep I was typing that word. And so, y'know, it feels like when I'm typing, when I'm writing text, that it's coming from within me to without me.

39:28 RTH: So I, I'm, I'm accepting that, but I don't need the explanation, whether I'm a descriptive guy, not an explanatory guy. And so the, so the question is, is the word "Novid" present to you at the moment of the beep?

39:43 Olivia: Yes.

39:44 RTH: Okay. And then what you *said* about that was "I hear myself speaking" that word?

39:51 Olivia: Yep.

39:53 RTH: And which is not to say, I hear the word, and it's not to say I spoke the word?

39:59 Olivia: And it's not to say, I think the word, which is what I said in the first beep isn't it? [RTH: Yeah.] But none of those words *think*, *speak*, *hear*, like *sensed* is probably the better word.

40:20 RTH: So I speci... It's the *word* "Novid." Is that true?

40:25 Olivia: Well, at the moment of the beep.

40:26 RTH: That's the moment that we're talking about [chuckles].

40:29 Olivia: Yeah.

40:31 RTH: At the moment of the beep, the *word* "Novid" is here, not the concept Novid, not the, not the concept of....

40:38 Olivia: Yeah the word. Definitely the word.

40:40 RTH: Okay.

40:40 Olivia: The word.

40:42 RTH: All right. And, and of that, we sound, we sound totally confident.

40:50 Olivia: Yeah. [RTH: Like I shouldn't, I shouldn't.] I do feel confident about that. And I think, because I am like of like. Um, I, I do, like, I like words. I'm like, I'm a words person. [RTH: Mm hmm.] I studied linguistics, y'know, in my undergraduate degree, like, I'm, I am, I am interested in and pay attention to words. [RTH: So I, I] And I just feel like I, words and letters are, are a present uh.

41:21 RTH: I, I totally, I totally accept all of that. And, but it's, but it's not what *my* interests are particularly. And, and my interest is, is that word present to you at the moment of the beep? [Olivia: Yeah.] And I'm hearing you say *yes* with confidence.

41:38 Olivia: Yeah. And, and the reason that I am confident that the *word* is present, as opposed to the concept or idea of it is that I am, I am typing the word. So I am, I am focused on the word. I mean...

41:56 RTH: So, [Olivia: ...yeah.] so that's an explanation, which I am gonna *discount* because I think, I think skilled typists can type without having any words involved at all. You can, y'know, you can, you, there are whether you can or not.

42:10 Olivia: Yeah, and in some, but I think the text message exchange that kind of typing.

42:18 RTH: So, so maybe so. And I'm not, I'm not disagreeing with you and I'm not discounting your explanations. It's just that I want us to set those explanations aside and ask whether the word is present, not and, and *experientially* present, not *theoretically* present (well, it must be present because I was typing it, and, y'know, I'm the kinda guy that when I type the words are present). The question is whether *this* particular word *Novid* was *present* on May 9th at 5:17, or whenever that, [Olivia: Yeah.] whenever that beep happened.

42:57 Olivia: Well, and then I think the other reason, I mean, look, honestly, Russell, I feel like, ughh, could be the word, could be the concept. I mean, I don't, y'know, like, I, I feel quite sure it's the word, obviously the word is communicating a concept. I think there's a focus on the word because it's also, y'know, it's a novel, like portmanteau construction that I think I was texting with someone, um, y'know, I've been texting people, oh, I'm sick, oh, is it COVID? Um, and then I wrote back, no, it's Novid. Y'know, I had a PCR and it's not COVID. Uh, y'know, so there's an element where I'm sending this, expecting them to understand it, aware that I, y'know, that I, that they might think it's a typo, like focusing

on, on a word much more than I would if I was writing *dog* or *couch* to someone. Cuz I know that they're instantly gonna understand that word.

43:53 RTH: So here's, here's the deal, you're a linguist. You absolutely know the difference between the word *Novid* and the concept *Novid*. There's I think, I think there's no doubt in your mind that, that, what the difference between a word and a concept is. And yet, [Olivia: Yeah.] the question *was the word present to you or was the concept present to you* is difficult for you. And that is interesting. And it would, and, and y'know, I'm, I'm working at trying to figure where, why, why that is cuz she, so in my, in my recollection of what's happened here, she started out fairly confident that the *word* was present, but now a few minutes later now she's well maybe it wasn't, maybe it was just a *concept* maybe, and....

44:49 Olivia: Well, because.

44:51 RTH: [laughs] And then she goes into *because*, which she can't seem to constrain herself, even though I've said I don't really care about the *because*. And, and, and um, and I want, I wanna be abundantly clear, I'm not critical. This is not a Russ criticizing Olivia. It's, it's, I, I fully accept that Russ and Olivia are talking about something which is fundamentally important to the work that I've spent my career doing, and probably the work that you spent your career doing. To say nothing of your inner experience in general and what inner experience means for you as you go about your, your everyday work. So, so, y'know, I've, I've, we're talking about stuff that's important, it seems. What I would, what I would say is that many people, probably most people that I give beepers to, don't have this difficulty. Most of them would say the word was there or it wasn't there. And you can, and I could talk 'em out, y'know, that's I could say, y'know, well Olivia says that sometimes the words and the concepts gets confused, isn't that like you? And they say, well, fuck no. [they laugh]

46:07 Olivia: [laughs] Well, I'm not sure what this says about me, but, uh, something, it says something about me.

46:21 RTH: It, it, it is the kinda thing that I think is, it's, it is what makes Olivia, part of what makes Olivia, Olivia. It's the way she experiences things is different from the way Russ experiences things. And so, Olivia has a personality that reflects the way she experiences things and Russ has a way, a personality that reflects his way. And I'm, I'm gonna be abundantly clear, I'm not saying Russ's way is better. And I don't think that, and, and I don't think I have a right to know the answer to that question actually. *Thou shalt not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* or whatever [Genesis 2:17], but then I think that's probably a hundred percent true, y'know.

So, was the word *Novid* present at the moment of the beep? And if, and it could be. So one, one way of trying to make sense out of our conversation is that at the beginning of our conversation, she was pretty clear about that, but then the conversation muddled the water. And so now she can't remember what was actually at the moment of the beep and what she said about the moment of the beep a little bit ago. And, and, and I, as a general rule, think that the more minutes I am into a conversation about a beep, the less, the less I can be confident about what's going on. I think that's. [Olivia: Yeah.] I think every question I ask muddies the water somewhat,

and every answer you give muddies the water somewhat, [Olivia: Yeah.] and that's not a criticism of Olivia or Russ, that's the way the world is.

48:06 Olivia: Yup.

48:07 RTH: And so the, my method of trying to deal with that is, what I call the iterative procedure. I, I want us to get I as a general rule to get more efficient at describing what's in experience over the course of day, after day, after day of sampling, so that we can nail down what the experience was like before we get the mud, water too muddied. But we haven't been too successful at that with you, *possibly* because it's been a long time in between sampling and possibly because it's a characteristic of your experience and those things are. And, and, and, and I don't, I don't wanna leave myself as the innocent bystander here because y'know, possibly, because I don't know how to an, how to ask the questions that help Olivia to describe her experience. I, I think that's, y'know.... The whole thing is interesting from every, every aspect, but I don't think that makes it useless. I think it makes it interesting.

49:10 Olivia: Yeah. I would agree. Are you gonna ask me again though, about *Novid*?

49:16 RTH: I think we're, I think we've probably screwed that one up.

49:19 Olivia: I think so. Should we move on to the next one?

49:21 RTH: Yeah. Let's, let's go to number 3.

SAMPLE 5.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

49:23 Olivia: So, so there, there was a piece of classical music in my head. Oh, sorry. I gotta blow my nose again. Hold on. I'm gonna mute myself here.

49:48 RTH: So without trying to explain why, just tell me what, what, what about this classical music in your head, what?

49:55 Olivia: So, it was, there was a, and not a whole piece, but a, a, y'know, a phrase, a refrain of a piece classical music. Um, I can't, and it was amazing cuz I was trying to write it. I can't say what it was. I'm pretty sure it's on a playlist that we have that when we put my daughter down to sleep, we have various classical music playlists, so, y'know, it's one of the, ah, so maybe a bit Mozart-y. I think I can remember which one it is now, but I'm not positive

50:28 RTH: So let, let's not worry about that. So when you say it's in your head, do you mean "I hear" (let's call it) Mozart...

50:33 Olivia: ...I hear the music...

50:33 RTH: ...Whether it was Mozart or not let's call it Mozart. [Olivia: Yeah.] So I hear, I hear Mozart in my head?

50:41 Olivia: And I hear the like instrumentation, so cuz sometimes I hear myself singing, but no, I'm hearing like instrumentation, music.

50:50 RTH: So I hear, I hear violins or cellos or whatever, {Olivia: Yeah, yeah.} whatever it is in my head? [Olivia: Yeah.] It's not in, it's not coming through the Alexa or whatever?

51:00 Olivia: Through the baby monitor or the Alexa, no.

51:03 RTH: Okay. All right.

51:04 Olivia: But that's where it came. I'm I'm, y'know, I'm also

51:08 RTH: [interrupts forcefully] Ah, ah, ah! Let's not go there! So I hear this Mozart-y thing in my head. And is there anything else in my experience at that particular moment?

51:17 Olivia: Well, I've written that I was also paying attention to my breath, because y'know, it was stuffed up, as in congested.

51:25 RTH: Okay. And, and to my breath, to my breathing?

51:31 Olivia: Yeah. To my breathing, my breath, my ability or lack of there, thereof to breathe.

51:37 RTH: And is this experience the same or different from, we had a, the first beep I think where we?

51:42 Olivia: I would say similar, like just, y'know, aware of my breathing apparatus and situation in a way that I'm not usually was in my consciousness.

51:55 RTH: So on the first beep, we were pretty specific about where that was, it was a fairly narrow [Olivia: Yes.] kind of a thing. And, and it wasn't so much as I re, as I understood it so much about the *breathing* as about the congestion, but maybe that's the same thing and we just didn't get to transmit it.

52:12 Olivia: I mean, I think it's all the same, just this general of experience of feeling blocked, um, uh, y'know, difficulty breathing, uncomfortable,...

52:25 RTH: Okay. [Olivia: ...congested.] And does it make sense to ask, which is more prominent to you at this particular moment, Mozart or the breathing? Does that question make sense?

52:35 Olivia: Wait, sorry. Say that again, s, say it again.

52:36 RTH: Which is more prominent in your experience: (If this question makes sense and maybe it doesn't), the, the hearing of Mozart or the attending to my breathing difficulty?

52:48 Olivia: The, the music, definitely.

52:49 RTH: 60--40, 90--10?

52:52 Olivia: Yeah, let's go 60--40.

52:54 RTH: Okay. And I don't...

52:55 Olivia: ...70--30 even.

52:56 RTH: Okay. So, so fairly substantially, but not the whole horribly dominantly. I don't really care about the numbers. I just, y'know, "more than" could be 51--49 and it could be 99--1, and those are experientially, very different kinds of things. So 70--30 is pretty substantially more music-y than, than [Olivia: Yeah.] mucus-y. [laughs] Music, but not mucus kind of a thing. So, and, and, are you confident about the fact that at the moment of this particular beep I was hearing this song, this piece?

53:39 Olivia: Yeah. But why are you asking me that?!? Because when you asked me that you, you, um, you... Like the question, I think inspires, uh, a lack of confidence.

53:53 RTH: [his phone plays a tune] Sorry about that. My doorbell.

53:55 Olivia: That's alright.

53:56 RTH: The.

54:03 Olivia: [laughs] Because I think the more you ask me, they go, well, y'know, was I?

54:11 RTH: So I, I, I am trying to understand what your, what your inner experience is like. I think that's the bottom line. And we, and, and I, what I take us to have said along the line here today is that, well, maybe it's clear, maybe it's not, maybe it's sort of fuzzy experience [inaudible] or whatever. But this particular beep, it s, it sounded like I was pretty clear, this was *this* song at *this* particular time. I can't remember what it was, but I, but, but at the time I knew what I, I was hearing it. That's what I understood you to be saying. And I, what I would like to know, I guess, is that, is there an experiential difference between this beep and, and some other beep where you weren't quite so confident?

55:12 Olivia: Um. So let, well, this might not answer the question, but y'know what I did when the, this beep happened and I was writing down the notes and I wanted to know, I wanted to, to be able to write down what the piece of music was. So I, y'know, that Shazam app on the phone that can [RTH: Yeah.] tell you. So I got out the app and tried to sing the piece of music into the Shazam, but of course I couldn't find it because amazingly, despite the fact that I could hear it with great clarity in my head, I could not reproduce it. Maybe that's not amazing, but, um, y'know, obviously there's a fair amount of skill required, uh, in singing an in-tune melody. Um, anyway, so I couldn't, but, but I'm, I mean, I, I am, I am, I am, I'm quite sure.

56:12 RTH: Well, that story would make it seem that at the, at the, within, at least within seconds, after the, after this sample, you were confident that there was a song going on, a piece going on confident enough that you thought that you could sing it enough, that Shazam

could recognize it. [Olivia: Yeah.] That that's the kinda thing that I take as, as good evidence as there could possibly be, that there was some kind of experience going on and, and it's not Russ that has screwed this up. I mean, Olivia believes, apparently at that mo, at that particular moment, that it was going on and, and that she could try to hum it to, to, Shazam. And she wasn't successful to that, which I'm not either when I try to do that. But the, but that doesn't matter what, as far as I'm concerned, as far as whether Olivia was hearing music. It, it's hard for me to, to imagine what it would be like for Olivia to have a beep and then say, well, I'm, I'm gonna, I'm gonna hum that to Shazam when there wasn't something in your experience at the, at the moment. I mean, that, that's, [Olivia: Yeah.] that's bizarre.

56:12 Russ comments: Olivia's Shazam story is a kind of natural validation observation, which I find substantially compelling. Our question (among others) has been whether Olivia experiences inner hearing, and about this sample it stretches credulity to answer any way other than Yes. It is *possible* that Olivia had no ongoing inner experience whatsoever, but the beep triggered her swiftly to create something that seemed real enough to her that she would try to sing it into Shazam. It is *possible* that she had an ongoing conceptual knowledge of a Mozart-y piece, which she translated into a *hearing* experience enough to sing into Shazam, and then forgot that she had so translated. Those and other explanations are possible, but they seem pretty unlikely: it seems much more reasonable to accept that Olivia was innerly experiencing something that resembled inner hearing at the moment of the beep.

Whatever the explanation, it is *not* an artifact created by some linguistic talking-past between Olivia and Russ. Russ had nothing to do with Olivia's Shazam experiment.

57:28 Olivia: I feel like it's good evidence that, that that's what was going on.

57:39 RTH: So that inspires me to think that at, well, Olivia, at least *some of the time* knows what's in her experience. And then that inspired me to ask, well, would Olivia see this as different from some of this some other times, or does it, is it sort of the same thing, but this one is somehow easier to capture because the Shazam was present or whatever.

58:07 Olivia: Well, because music is its own kind of language, right? In a way that words versus concepts, it's a blurry line. Um.

58:28 RTH: The, the disadvantage of being smart is that it's easy to, you have the, have the ability to make up stories that go, go in all different, all different directions. [they laugh] And, and the [pause]

58:45 Olivia: I think it's a good theory. My theory, I just came up with, I mean.

58:49 RTH: And, and, and it might very well be true. And, and, and probably like most theories, it's 10% true. If you got a theory that's 10% true, you're doing really well. But [pause] So the, what, what I, what I've got out of this is at least sometimes Olivia knows what's in her experience, long enough, long enough to hum it into Shazam anyway. And maybe it's because it's music, and maybe it's because it was five o'clock in the afternoon as opposed to four o'clock in the afternoon, and maybe it was because the sun had just come out, or maybe it was for, for a whole lot of other reasons, which I think are....

59:46 Olivia: But I, so I think my, my reflection on this whole experience of doing the, y'know, and obviously I read a lot about this process before I did it with you. Um, and so in some ways was, was, and continue to do it on myself, even when I'm not wearing the beeper in that, y'know, there are times when, what is in my inner experience is very, um, definitive or well defined. In that it's, y'know, I, I do, I catch myself rehearsing a conversation I'm about to have with somebody or, um, y'know, think like thinking in really specified way, sometimes. I often find music in my head, y'know, just realize that there's a bit of music on repeat in my head. Sometimes I know where it's come from; sometimes I ha, I don't. Um, but a lot of the time, y'know, there's also just kinda nothing so clearly specific. There's well, a lot of the time, I guess there's, um, external input in the form of text or conversation. But sometimes, y'know, if someone said, what do you think right now? I'd be like, oh, y'know, kinda, y'know, couldn't, couldn't say for sure, I was thinking I wanna have, y'know, a cheese sandwich for lunch.

1:01:22 RTH: Well, I, I think what you have just said for the last minute is a pretty good characteristic of what we have found in the beeps: that sometimes the beeps are pretty clear, my inner experience was pretty clear and I heard Mozart or whatever. And sometimes it's, it's not. [Olivia: Yeah.] And, and what I would say, having been around the block a few times in this regard, is that there are a lot of people who are *always* clear, that will know would *never* have a beep where they get, where they didn't know what was going on. And there are other people who are *never* clear. And there are other people who have multiple things going on simultaneously and can tell you about what they are. And other people who have a mess, experientially. And, and I'm.... What I, what I think is that it's worth, it's worthwhile exploring it. And I think science, psychological science in general, has short, short-circuited itself or short-sighted itself by not trying. [pause] So should we move on to beep number 4?

1:02:48 Olivia: Yes. [RTH: However, however.] Well, lemme just ask you one more question. Don't you think, I mean, the whole CBT is kind of that, isn't it, it's getting people to identify thoughts and then, um, speak to themselves about those thoughts, right? Like, the whole, y'know, the, my understanding of CBT is, y'know, like being aware of a thought that you're having that could be in language or could be in concepts, but is something that is happening in your head and then responding to that, right?

1:03:33 RTH: Well, I, I think that is the philosophy behind CBT. And I think that they're hugely mistaken in the, in the sense that I believe that most or many are, uh, influential CBTers think that there is a well-defined thought of the kind that they say that you're, you're supposed to be able to discover. [Olivia: Yeah.] Which I think is probably not true. And, and then they train you to think in a, in a such a way that is gonna change your existence. And they don't do what I think is anywhere as near a, a good enough job to ascertain whether some new kinda thinking actually does take place. So, so I, I would say I'm not on the CBT bandwagon. I think, I think CBT might be more effective if they knew what a thought was in the first place. And, y'know, there, there are some people who think in words and most CBT thinkers, most CBTers that I know of believe that all thinking is in words. And it's....

1:04:37 Olivia: Yeah. Yeah.

1:04:38 RTH: And then they, so then they teach people to change the words that they use. And I think that's mistaken on the way in and mistaken on the way out.

1:04:47 Olivia: Yeah.

1:04:51 RTH: But that doesn't mean that it's not useful. You can do, you can, it's quite pos, quite, quite likely certain situations that engaging in CBT, even though, even though you're not doing what you think you're doing, you're doing something that's useful to somebody. Doesn't, probably have anything to do with whether they were talking to themselves, but, but we can enter into a contract where we can, where we can jointly assume that I was talking about this, and you were talking about that. Then you're gonna change the way I talk about this and you talk about that, and it doesn't happen to be true, but, but we might feel better at the end of it. But what I think, rightly or wrongly, is that if psychological science knew what was really going on in inner experience then, then they might have a better, something better, more efficient, more useful, more whatever than CBT. I mean CBT, so CBT is useful for 25% of the people or whatever that number is, maybe it's 40% or whatever. Well, why doesn't it work for those other folks? And, and I don't think that the CBT folks have a way of answering that question because you gotta do something like what I do, *I think*, to answer that kind of a question.

1:06:19 Olivia: Yeah. Yeah. I think you're probably right.

1:06:22 RTH: And it could very well be that the kinda thing that I would do, won't answer that question either. I'm, I'm, I'm totally on board with that, I, I think that's quite possible. What I, what I'm quite sure of is that we don't know the answer to that because there aren't very many people out there doing it. [pause]

So we've been at this for an hour here. We gonna, gonna get to the rest of the beeps, or are we gonna, we gonna say that this was I'm happy...

1:06:53 Olivia: ...Should we do one more beep? Why don't we do one more beep, and then I may need to go and actually drink some tea and lie down.

1:07:01 RTH: Number 4.

SAMPLE 5.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

1:07:02 Olivia: Um, so this is number 4. This is number 4, the next one. So, I was alone in the kitchen chopping carrots and the radio was on. Here's what I've written: "chopping carrots, paying attention to the action and the sound of the chopping as well as the voice on the radio." [laughs] Um, and y'know, what's interesting and, y'know, returning to our conversation about the memory of it. Y'know, obviously the beep goes off and I quickly, y'know, think about the words that I've just heard literally in that moment, y'know, in the fractions of seconds before the beep. Um, and I really thought I didn't write them down this time and I actually can't even remember what they were talking about. I assume it was politics because we are in the run up to a federal election. I think I would've thought that I would have remembered it, but I haven't. Um, yeah.

1:08:22 RTH: So how about the chopping of the carrots? Do you remember that?

1:08:27 Olivia: Yeah, I think I do.

1:08:30 RTH: Okay. So what I have come to think about that is so, so let tell me about the chopping of the carrots. So you, you said it was both the sound and the, and the action, is that what you said?

1:08:44 Olivia: Yeah. Yeah.

1:08:45 RTH: So what, tell me, what, what do you remember what?

1:08:48 Olivia: Well, I think I remember, I remember paying attention to the chopping. Um, y'know, in a, in a way I, y'know, I think a lot of the mundane, daily task-y kind of things, I would say.

1:09:15 RTH: Let's try to set that aside and get back to the, this particular chopping.

1:09:18 Olivia: Well, look, so I was, I was definitely paying attention to sort of the action, the movement, how I was cutting and also the sound, the sound of the, y'know, the knife through and the, the sort of click at the end.

1:09:31 RTH: And, and by the action of the cutting, do you mean your hand and arm action?

1:09:36 Olivia: Yeah, my hand and arm action and the movement of the knife.

1:09:40 RTH: Both?

1:09:42 Olivia: Yeah.

1:09:43 RTH: So, so it would be possible for somebody to be interested, for whatever reason, to the action of the knife, going through the carrot. I'm just paying attention to the, the blade of the knife going through the carrot. *Or* somebody else could be I'm, I'm, I'm noticing how my body is pushing this knife and I can feel...

1:10:05 Olivia: Yeah, but I think I'm, it's, it's, it's both and it's more, but it's more my, my movement and the movement of the knife and not like it doesn't resound to hear you say, thinking about the blade passing through the carrot.

1:10:24 RTH: So it's the movement of the chopping, it's the Olivia chopping rather than the knife cutting. Is that right?

1:10:31 Olivia: Yes. Yep.

1:10:32 RTH: Okay.

1:10:32 Olivia: Yeah.

1:10:33 RTH: Okay.

1:10:36 RTH: And then at the same time I *hear* [pause] something? Right? What do I hear?

1:10:44 Olivia: Yeah. I mean, I'm listening to the radio, I'm paying attention to the radio, I'm hearing words. Um.

1:10:54 RTH: So I was more interested in, in the chopping. So you had the sound of the chopping.

1:10:58 Olivia: Oh, yeah. I'm hearing the kinda regular steady, uh, y'know, unmistakable sound of chopping. And probably appreciating it. There's an element of, of appreciating that sound, enjoying that sound.

1:11:16 RTH: And, and, and by rhythmic, you mean, it's not like I hear this chop and then this chop, and then this other chop? It's that I hear a, a circular or repetitive chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, chop, is that?

1:11:32 Olivia: Well, I don't know if circular or repetitive is [RTH: Alright then.] part of the, it's just, just, y'know, being aware that every time I chop there's a sound and that sound is a chopping of carrots sound, which is, y'know, I think a nice sound. Um.

1:11:51 RTH: Okay. But I, so I'm, I'm, I'm what I'm gathering is that this is a sound that's sort of extended in time. It's not like I'm hearing one particular chop, I'm hearing a repeat?

1:12:07 Olivia: Well, it's true because I mean, ye, obviously at the moment of, or in the moments before the beep, there would be one chop, but I've written down the chopping sounds. So, y'know, I guess I've extrapolated a little bit to my experience of what I'm doing in that kind of minute around the beep. Y'know, I was there, I had a bunch of carrots that I had peeled and I was chopping and I was listening to the radio. So that was, and I was kinda in a state of focusing or of those things being in my experience for probably a whole minute. And the beep came within that minute. I mean, maybe it wasn't a minute, maybe it was that, I mean, how long I was chopping for.

1:12:54 RTH: So experience is, uh, is a, is a wonderful thing, I guess I would say. And I, I'm, when I say I'm interested in experiences *at a moment*, I don't mean to say I'm interested in a *momentary* experience. What I mean is experience that is *caught in flight* at a particular moment. So I wanna be precise about the moment, but that doesn't mean that the experience is short. So the fact of the rhythmic, of the rhythmic of chopping the rhythm of chopping, the repetitiveness of the chop, chop chopping, that is extended in time, maybe for a minute: I've been listening to that for quite some time, I think that's possible. But, and, and so at the moment it would not be fair, so I'm gathering what you're saying, it, it is, it would not be, it would not do justice to my experience to say *I heard a chop*. What my experience was of a repetitiveness of chops, a series of chops. [Olivia: Yeah.] And that's obviously extended back in time before the beep or whatever, but my experience which was caught in flight at the, at the moment of the beep *was* this series of chop sounds.

1:14:12 Olivia: Yeah.

1:14:13 RTH: And so that I think is, y'know, I think that's one of the ways that ex, experience works. Experience, *isn't* one chop and then another chop, and then another chop, because if you go there, you could say, well, y'know, there's the first half of the chop, and then there's the second half of the chop, and then there's the first half of the first half and the second half of the second half and whatever. So you, you, you can never stop that, but that's not the way experience works. Your experience makes some kinda sense out of things in the sense that it happened to be making in this case seems, I'm hearing the, the pleasant, rhythmic chop, chop, chop of carrots [Olivia: Yeah.] that seems somehow in sync with my chopping motion.

1:14:13 Russ comments: RTH here makes it seem like it is not possible to hear just one chop out of a series. That is not what he intends. He is trying to say that *Olivia's* experience is of a chop-chop-chop series, not of one chop, and then of another chop, and then of another chop. *Someone else*, in the same situation, might well hear a single chop, and then a single chop, and then a single chop, one of which is interrupted by the beep. That person's experience would be very different from Olivia's, even though the physical acoustics might be identical.

1:14:59 Olivia: Yeah.

1:15:06 RTH: And then, that I seem to be able to remember, but I have trouble remembering what's going on in the radio. And so now Russ wants to know why, why that is. And, and he's pretty sure he is not gonna find out. And so that's why in general, he does this kinda thing frequently. But what I would say overall, haven't done in a long time is that, it takes people generally a while to become comfortable with the fact that their experience might be dominantly of the, what, of the sensory awareness kind like the chop, chop chop thing.

1:15:42 Olivia: Yeah. But I mean, I think that's right and I would say that that would be, y'know, that I was, the radio was on, I was listening to it, but I was not my, the, the focus of my attention was probably the carrots, the chopping the sound. Um, yeah, y'know, I mean, I feel like it's, you can be listening to something, you can be hearing something and not listening to it, which was what I was doing, I would say, or half listening.

1:16:25 RTH: And yeah, I agree with that. So I, I would say many of your beeps today were of the sensory variety. [Olivia: Yeah.] Some because you were sick, maybe because you were sick, you could say it was cuz I was sick and so I was paying attention to the sensations. But it, but it might also be because Olivia actually has a lot of sensory awareness and she happens to be sick and so her sense, sensory apparatus was aimed at, uh, prominent sensory things, which was nose stuffiness.

1:16:57 Olivia: Yeah.

1:16:58 RTH: But there's also music stuff and other kinds of things. And so I will say some people, and I'm not, I'm not saying that this is a characteristic for you, cuz if I had to bet, I'd probably bet against it. But it, but for some people, when they sample with me and

about the third day, they start to recognize that they have all this sensory awareness of, and when they do that, it's like af, then after that everything is clear. Well, I was just, I was sensing this and I was sensing that and I was sensing this and I'm always sensing that. I'm obviously processing the rest of the world, but it's not directly in my experience because what's in my experience, what my consciousness finds interesting, is sounds. And, and when people realize that about themselves, then they will say, well y'know, now I'm pretty clear about what was going on at my, at, at the beep. I was into this sensory aspect and you could say, well, y'know, they just figured out that Russ wants to hear about sensory stuff and once they did that then... And I don't think that's really true, cuz Russ doesn't care about sensory stuff any more than he cares about a lot of other stuff. But that doesn't mean that, y'know, my participants might believe things about Russ that's not true and doesn't stop them from, from shaping their behavior according to their belief about what, what, what Russ wants.

So the, y'know, the, the endeavor that we have been participating in, what this kind of interview I think is difficult, I think it's complicated from a variety of different ways, variety of different reasons. And one, and one could say that *Olivia* approaches this exercise in a way that frequently involves explanatory flights of fancy or something like that. [she laughs] And, and, and I don't, I don't mean that in a negatory way at all. I, I I'm commenting that, y'know, an explanation is coming short, shortly. And, uh, and that there's, that there's advantages to that. And, but then the, but then the question becomes well, so Olivia's experience might be just exactly like mine or exactly like Alek's or exactly like anybody else's, but *she*, for whatever reason, likes to tell explanatory stories. And Alek doesn't, and so Alek doesn't give explanations and Olivia does, but their experience is the same. That's a, that's a possibility.

1:19:55 Olivia: Well, how will you ever know that?

1:19:59 RTH: Well, I don't know that we ever know that for sure, but what we *have* is people, people like *me* who, who takes that seriously on an individual basis. So it's, it's not like I, I think sit back and think about people while it could be this way, it could be that way. It's like, so I'm out there in the trenches with Olivia and then I'm in the trenches with Alek and I'm in the trenches with whomever else [Olivia: Yeah.] trying to answer the, trying to answer these questions, and, and trying to rid myself of the preconceptions of the answers to the questions. And, uh, the best I, the best I can say after having, after having done that is I'm guessing it has something to do with Alek's experience is different from Olivia's experiences. And that, [Olivia: Yeah.] and that, and that, then that's not to say that Alek is better or worse or whatever, because I, I firmly believe that thou shall not eat from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, I don't think I know that knowledge of good and evil and I'm, it's not given to me to know that. And...

1:21:23 Olivia: It strikes me that it's, so the options could be, as you've kind of said, either everyone's experience is the same, but different people have different ways of accessing and expressing their experience;...

1:21:38 RTH: That's possible.

1:21:40 Olivia: ,,or that everyone's experience is completely different. [pause] Yep.

- 1:21:54 RTH: What I, what I would say is that I've, I have seen enough people in enough different situations, that are enough different that I think it's, I *don't* think it's the case that people's experience is the same.
- 1:22:14 Olivia: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I think you're right. It seems like the, the latter is the better explanation.
- 1:22:29 RTH: What I, and I also think it's, it's difficult, y'know, we've, we've spent a fair number of hours together and we're both pretty smart people and we've, we've applied ourselves to this task and, and we haven't loosened the Gordian knot of it, entirely. And, and so it is, it is difficult.
- 1:23:06 Olivia: Do you think that a hundred years into the future, there'll be some sort of technological solution that makes this sampling easier, more accurate, uh, different?
- 1:23:31 RTH: So I, I, it's hard to bet against technology. I've been burned pretty badly on a few occasions for, for vastly under-, under-appreciating what was coming, what was coming. And, uh, so I think the answer to that is probably Yes. But I, but I also think that, that the techno, that the technology is more likely in the term that I can imagine (let's put it that way) the technology is more likely to validate the kind of exercise that you and I are engaged in. So when I say something like people's inner experience are different, I think the technology is gonna be able to come on, come and say, well, Russ was right, or Russ was wrong. [Olivia: Yeah.] And I, and I, of course think that Russ is right, and so the, I think the technology is gonna be able to, to show what about... So what I, what I really think about Russ is that he's, he's partially right and partially, partially wrong, and y'know, whether it's 50--50 or 90--10 or whatever, 10--90. I don't know. But, but I think the technology is gonna be able to validate the portion of Russ that's right and invalid the portion of Russ that's wrong, which doesn't make Russ inconsequential. It makes him *more* consequential, but it can also, it can also maybe establish of all these people who claim to be doing DES or whatever, which of them are actually good at it. [Olivia: Yeah.] The technology might be able to solve that problem.
- 1:25:13 Olivia: Yeah.
- 1:25:17 RTH: And it could, and it could also be that the technology would come to recognize that the technology can't answer the question, so we humans are left to just to try to figure it out. I don't know. Or we'll just blow ourselves off the planet. And then...
- 1:25:40 Olivia: I mean, that's probably more likely.
- 1:25:41 RTH: ...some other civilization will have to start the same thing and when they get to this, when they get close to this portion of the problem, then they're solving the problem, then they'll blow themselves up. [pause] So are we gonna do this again, or we think we've done this enough?
- 1:26:07 Olivia: Look, I'm, I, I actually find it quite enjoyable, so I'm happy to do it again. Um, I mean, how many times do you like to do it with people?

1:26:20 RTH: I, I would say it depends. I've, I've done it as few as three, maybe (or less if people drop out or whatever), but, and as many as 50 maybe.

1:26:31 Olivia: Oh, wow.

1:26:34 RTH: It's pretty heroic to do 50.

1:26:35 Olivia: Well seeing as we're close to the as few as having only done it four times. I mean, sure. Let's do it again.

1:26:41 RTH: All right.