

Pete
Pete Interview 10
Debrief Interview

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the May 23 interview with Peter Hoskin that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/g-pbZPTBmSY>. If you have corrections, suggestions, or questions, please post them as YouTube comments.

RTH = Russ Hurlburt
Pete = Peter Hoskin

- 0:00 Russ comments: The comments that I have inserted in the transcript below are intended as commentary about what I think at the time I write the comment, which is generally within a day or so of the interview. They are not to be confused with the Truth with a capital T; there is no guarantee that I will agree with them if I review them at some later time, at which time I might revise or extend them; they are invitations to Pete to disagree, or to amplify, or to say he doesn't understand, and so on. If he wishes to insert his own comments, he should pick a color other than this green and then do so. He should also feel free to correct the transcript.
- 0:00 Pete: Journalistic, um, in this session. Um, can we do these off camera? Um, just so I feel that you are not, you are not compromising your answers. Not that I'm gonna ask anything controversial, but y'know what I mean.
- 0:14 Russ: I, we can do that however it is that you, however, however it is that you would like to do that.
- 0:20 Pete: Okay, lovely. Well, if, if, I mean, I might, I might just ask questions as we're going, but if, if it turns out that I've got some leftover, I might ask them off recording at the end, if that's okay.
- 0:30 Russ: Yeah, I, I think that's, I think that's fine. I don't, I don't, I wouldn't anticipate being unwilling to answer any questions that you would ask, [Pete: But, um...] but, but I'll, I'll leave that up to you.
- 0:45 Pete: Lovely. Thank you. Um, right. The debrief.
- 0:50 Russ: So the de, the object of the debrief is to, is for you to ask any questions that you want, that you would like to ask about what we have done and what we have found and why we did it, and whatever. And, um....

What Russ learned about Pete's experience

1:05 Pete: Okay. Well, this, this might just cover up all the questions in that case. I was, um, so yeah. Um, gosh, I don't really know where to start. Um, can I be extremely solipsistic and just start with, um, what do you take from all this? What, what have you learned about me? What's striking? Um, what's the [inaudible]

Meta-experience

1:29 Russ: What I, what I found, I guess, unusual about your experience was the, what was, I guess the substantial amount of meta-awareness, which I think was pretty unusual. And, and that meta-awareness seemed to be in a variety of different ways: that, that you would go, you would feel your eyes, feel yourself going towards your eyes or going towards your ears when you were gonna see something or hear something. [Pete: Yeah.] I think that that's pretty unusual. And, uh, I, I don't have a theory about why I think that's unusual or not. I'm, you're, you're asking me what I thought was unusual and that that would be one thing.

2:11 Pete: Well, when you say it's unusual, does that mean you haven't been encountered this *much* before? Like, because it, it seems to be you had a lexicon, like meta-experience is something that, like meta attention is something that it seems to me you've said before, you've come across before.

2:27 Russ: Um, yes. Yes. So I, I, I would say I've seen meta-awareness fairly often one way or another. [Pete: Yeah.] But not, not quite as often as with you. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And not as extreme as with you, I would say.

2:46 Pete: Hmm! Okay.

2:48 Russ: And by *extreme*, I mean not as specific. Like, like you felt, you, you, the cone kind of a thing where you felt something coming towards you, [Pete: Yeah.] an experience coming towards you that seemed to travel through some kind of a cone thing or whatever. [Pete: Yeah.] That's pretty specifically meta-aware, meta-awareness.

3:10 Pete: Yeah. And, and, and just to be clear, of course, this doesn't mean that other people that have that experience, it just means you haven't spoken to them.

Sampling with other populations

3:18 Russ: For sure. That's correct. [Pete: Yeah.] So I, I would say I've sampled, I, I've sampled in depth with some couple hundred people, [Pete: Yeah.] almost all of them, English speaking. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] Most of them of European descent. [Pete: Yeah.] And, uh, and that is a clear limitation of the studies that I have done.

3:40 Pete: Yeah.

3:42 Russ: Which, which is too bad from my point of view. If I had my life to do over again, I'd probably try to figure out how to do it, how to do that differently. But, but the, the, I guess I thought along the way that there were enough challenges to figuring out how to do it *at all* rather than to try to do it with Chinese speakers or [Pete: Yeah.]

or people in, in communities that, that rarely, rarely see industrialization or whatever. That would be *totally interesting* to me.

4:11 Pete: Yeah.

4:12 Russ: But, but I have, I, I guess I get, if I, if I had to have said what I thought was gonna happen in 1985, or whenever, uh, when, whenever I thought this was getting off the ground, I, I thought there would, there would be a lot of people like me who would be in totally interested in inner experience, and there'd be leg, legions of us doing this kind of work in, in what I thought was as good or better than I was doing. [Pete: Yeah.] And then that those people could go, go to the places that they had access to and, y'know, and, and report back. [Pete: Yeah.] But that, but that hasn't, that hasn't turned out to be the case for reasons which are, which are still surprising to me. But, uh,

4:56 Pete: Well, I'd like to get on back onto that, frankly, but just to stick with, with *me* [laughs] for the time being. Cuz I, I've seen online that you've found, you've, you've, you've done the beeper test with people who might be on the sort of autism spectrum or who might be depressive. And, and I, I don't know if you feel confident enough in saying yes, they have a certain type of experience that other people don't have. But if, am I, am I right in saying that people who are autism might have more imagery-based thoughts? Um, and if that's the case, what, what would me with meta-attention, um, and metro experiences, what does, is there anything you can say about me from that? Um, or not?

5:45 Russ: Well, well, first off, I would say I haven't sampled with enough of any population to be confident about anything as far as a population is concerned. [Pete: Okay.] So I try, I try not to give too... I, I try to be careful when I gen when I am asked to generalize about populations, [Pete: Yeah.] because in order, in order to say something about autistic *populations*, that would be.... I think, I think autism is a, a mixed and changing bag and [Pete: Yeah.] And, uh, and an important one, but with, with wide, wildly (or widely both), uh, different definitions of what counts as autism. [Pete: Yeah.] And so when you ask me, well, can I, can I generalize about autism? That's, that's a difficult thing for me to do. I can say [Pete: Okay] that I have sampled with a bunch of people at the ti, with a handful of people, I should say, with a handful of people who at the time were English speaking As..., thought to be Asperger's syndrome kind of folks.

6:49 And those people had entirely, that handful of people had, if they had any inner experience at all, which they didn't always have, but if they had any, it was entirely visual. [Pete: Okay.] And I think, I think that is an interesting finding. And that would be one of those things where I would, I would like to have a legion of people who are out doing careful, what I found to be adequate inner experience investigations, and see whether that's true for some subset of autistic people, and, and in which case, what subset. But that, but that's, we're, we're, we are, sadly enough from my point of view, still a long way away from that goal. [Pete: Okay.] So, so what it, what it means for your questions, what it means to, to, yeah, exactly. Bring it back to you what it means for Pete to have, have, uh, meta-awareness, frequent meta-awareness.

Inner experience and personality

7:47 So what, what, what difference does that make? And I think the answer to that is we should start with, I don't know what difference that makes. It's, it, it is a remarkable observation. And it, and, and how, what the significance of that is, ranges can range from *nothing*... So I think one could argue that inner experience is mostly or entirely meta, or not meta, but, uh, *epiphenomenal*. [Pete: Yeah.] Pete, Pete makes his way through the world, whatever. And what, what happens is in his inner experience doesn't really matter. I think, I think one could argue that. I doubt that that's entirely true. I suspect that it's, I suspect that it's not true in some important way. But, but, but now we're in the, now we're in the realm of a *personality* speculation. [Pete: Yeah.] That is, what are the characteristics of Pete's personality that lead him to have this kind of experience or, or more importantly probably the other way around? What are the characteristics of this experience that leads him to have that kind of personality.

7:47 Russ comments: By holding that inner experience is an *epiphenomenon* I mean that experience might *arise from* brain activity but does not itself *influence* any physical (including brain) activity. So it might be the case that Pete's meta-experience is epiphenomenal—it *happens* (Pete is not imagining it), but it has *no real significance* for him. I doubt that that is true, but I don't know that for a fact.

8:57 Pete: Yeah.

8:58 Russ: Person, person.

8:58 Pete: Is that the way you see it, by the way? That the experience creates a personality? Or

9:11 Russ: I, I see it as a feedback kind of a thing.

9:15 Pete: Okay. Okay.

9:16 Russ: What, what I think, what I think is that people have genetic makeup or whatever, perinatal what, whatever early experiences, whatever, that leads them to be predisposed to, to have certain, uh, inner-experiential characteristics. And then they practice or *don't* practice those things. And so they get good at it at some aspect or, or not.

9:40 Pete: Yeah.

9:42 Russ: And I see that as being sort of like the sim similar [he misspeaks and corrects this to "physical"] things. Y'know, I, I've got my physical character... as *physical* things. So I've got my physical characteristics, and I could have worked hard at, at developing my physical characteristics, but I *never* would've been a linebacker, in in the NFL, y'know, I'm, I don't, yeah. I'm not shaped like that, and I never will be shaped like that, but I could have gotten closer [Pete: Yeah.] to it than I got, y'know, if I'd worked at it.

10:08 Pete: Yeah.

10:10 Russ: But, so I think, I think the inner-experience characteristics or something, something like that, [Pete: Okay.] and we're, we're a long way of, a long way of knowing how that actually works. [Pete: Yeah.] And I, and, and it comes, it comes back to that we have never been careful about getting actual high-fidelity views of inner experience, one person at a time. [Pete: Yeah.] And so what's, what speculations we have made, the *science* has made, about people is based on pretty faulty views of inner experience.

10:44 Pete: Yeah.

Pete has learned a lot about himself

10:45 Russ: Like for, for example, *you*, if you had, if you had been, or maybe you have been enrolled in some kind of a psychological study, *pre DES*, and so you would've filled out questionnaires on the, of the kind that measured depression or anxiety or whatever, or whatever personality characteristics. [Pete: Yeah.] To the extent that they inquired about your inner experience, you would not have said, I've got multiple experience, or I've got meta-experience, or I've got, y'know, this kind of imagery or that kind of imagery or whatever. Your, your speculations would've been pretty far off the mark. [Pete: Yeah.] But that is, that is the basis of... Those kind, those kinds of things are the basis of modern experiential science. [Pete: Yeah.] which, which from my point of view is just not good enough.

11:35 Pete: Okay. Okay. Um, I feel in all of this, Russ, that I've learned a lot about myself. Um, I, I think I've said to you already, and I certainly wrote down: one of the things that surprised me if, if two months ago or before we started, you said, "How do you think, Pete?" I'd have said, "Oh, I just talk to myself all the time." Um, in doing this, I've realized I, I rarely do that, actually. Um, and that the inner voice is not constant. It's not strong. Often it's the unspoken words that we've talked about.

12:08 But, um, so I've learned that about myself. I'm very *surprised* about it. My, I guess my question is, *is there anything I can do about this? Is there anything I should do about it?* Like, now I know more about how I think I'm way more visual than I thought I have. The meta, ex meta-experience, meta-attention. Um, is, is that where this stops and ends? Is it, is it an interesting learning or is there some way here where I should be thinking of compensating or benefiting from this or, or otherwise?

Know thyself

12:47 Russ: So now, now that yes, me to speculate into the *should* range, which I, which I'm not very good at either. But when, when I think about, when I think about that is that the Oracle, the "Know thyself" Oracle, was, is basically right in a very deep way. [Pete: Yeah.] And so I suspect that it is *of value to Pete* to know that his inner, that his inner life is really not populated by words, and it is populated by visual imagery and meta experience and whatever. I expect that's of value to Pete. [Pete: Yeah.] In

what way that is of value. I don't think I know the answer to that question, but that's the way *Pete is*, I think, [Pete: Yeah.] and, and for *Pete to know how Pete is*, is, I'm guessing, a really useful thing [Pete: Yeah. I'm...] in some fundamentally important way of being useful.

12:47 Russ comments: I think it is a characteristic *of our era* that Pete should seek personality or diagnostic answers to the question *what is it (his inner experience) good for?* I am not a priest or a philosopher of ethics, and I do not presume to know what is good for Pete (or anyone else). But as best I can tell, I think it is of value to Pete to know *what it (his inner experience) is*. That is, I think it is of value to Pete to grasp with fidelity what actually passes before the footlights of his consciousness. And I think that value stands on its own, *without* having to be filtered through some set of correlations with personality variables or psychiatric diagnostic criteria. That is, I don't think Pete has to know *why* it is of value for it to *be* of value.

13:47 Pete: Just to, I'm not disagreeing with any of that. I like, I feel *exactly* the same way. It feels, it feels so useful to know, so good to know, but in ways that I didn't quite know. [laughs]

13:47 Russ comments: That that understanding seems weird or indefensible is, I think, a characteristic of our era. It wasn't always thus, and it won't necessarily always be thus.

13:57 Russ: And, and, and so, so the question that you were asking was, is a personality question. So, so, so what is it about, about my lack of inner speech and multiple experience and inner and meta-experience and whatever, what, what are the personality characteristics of that that are important? I think that's, that is the way psychology asks questions. And I think it's not the right way, [Pete: Yeah.] probably, in some very important way. Be, because the it, *Pete is the way he is*, regardless of whether anybody else is that way. And regardless of whether anybody else *thinks* they are that way, even though they probably aren't that way or whatever. And for Pete to know the way he is, regardless of some,... that's what.... [restarts] For Pete to know the way he is, is an important deal, I think, [Pete: Yeah.] regardless of any personality-significant ways of thinking about that.

13:57 Russ comments: If there were a mature experiential science, which actually did know the relationships between actual inner experience characteristics and actual personality characteristics, then I might have a very different opinion from what I have stated here. But I think the current-state-of-the-art personality and diagnostic characteristics are based on questionnaire and clinical-interview self-reports, and those are as close to the truth about personality and diagnostic categories as Pete's pre-DES opinions about his inner experience are to his post-DES opinions.

15:02 Pete: Yeah.

15:03 Russ: Yeah. So when you, when, when you're gonna be in whatever situation: with your, with your son, or in the grocery store, or waiting in line at the airport or, or confronting a disaster, or whatever unusual circumstance, idio, idiosyncratic

circumstance you find yourself in, it would be a value to Pete, I think, to know how he, how he functions, what, what's happening with them.

Premeditated vs. natural inner experience

15:30 Pete: Yeah. The, the, the other thing I find strange about it in a way is I can't, it seems to me you can't change that internet experience. Um, and I, I've tried to like, you, you almost, it's, it's not that you can't change it, you can't replicate it. All this, you can't, you can't do it. Um, I guess the, the thing that what is, is, y'know, when you start thinking about breathing, um, and then it's really difficult. It feels very weird to think in, out, in, out, this thing that you just do naturally all the time. I, I found the same with my thinking in that I've tried to think, *okay, well I'll do a, I'll do one of those images without seeing*, and it's just impossible [laughs], uh, to do it that way. Whereas actually, I do that *all the time* or a *lot* of the time. Um, and it just seemed to me again, that that hits on the kind of practicality. This is not something that I can, this is not self-help. It's not something I can figure out. It's not something I can work towards because I, it just happens. Um, and, and I can't really affect it, right. Cuz I can't, I can't even, does that make sense?

16:38 Russ: So I, I think the insight of, uh, that that my, that my inner experience when I premeditate it is not the same thing as my inner experience when I just naturally have it; [Pete: Yeah.] and then my pre, my premeditation might not change anything directly. I think those are important insights.

16:57 Pete: Okay.

16:58 Russ: And I think another one of my criticisms of psychology, I think psychology doesn't take that seriously enough. [Pete: Okay.] So they, they, for example, they, the, if, if a really top-notch state-of-the art study of inner speech would put people into a scanner, say, [Pete: Yeah.] and ask them to say, say things silently. Speak, speak silently.

16:58 Russ comments: Russ is imagining a study where the participant is instructed: when a signal appears, *silently say "elephant"*; or at another signal to *silently say "pencil."*

17:23 Pete: Yeah.

17:23 Russ: Well, speaking silently premeditatedly is not the same thing as speaking silently naturally, and putting *Pete* into the scanner who, who rarely actually inner-speak, inner-speaks and putting *somebody else* into the scanner who might inner speak *a lot*. Well, that would be, they would be very different from each other. [Pete: Yeah.] But, but they, but we don't, in, in the state of the art that we've got it now, we don't, we can't make that differentiation, [Pete: Yeah.] because the only way we ask him was we ask, we would ask Pete, are you the, y'know, the, the pre-DES Pete, we would, we would've asked you, "Are you the kinda guy that speaks a lot?" And you would've said, "Yeah! I am!" [Pete: Yeah.] And you, and they would've say, okay, let's put you in the scanner [Pete: Yeah.] and find out something about inner speech. But that, but that's totally flawed. [Pete: Yeah.]

17:23 There are two flaws: One is presuming that inner speaking on demand is the same inner speaking as naturally occurs in everyday environments; the other is believing that people who *say* they innerly speak a lot actually *do* innerly speak a lot.

18:09 [Russ continues] But what I would, what I would say is that I have seen a *few* pretty miraculous changes in inner experience as the re, which I think is as the result of DES and, and, uh, and so I don't think it's fair to say that people can't change. But the changes were not because the people set out to change, it was because something happened while they were doing DES that that, uh, change changed their, their relationship to their own inner experience.

18:46 Pete: Caused by DES?

18:48 Russ: I think so, yeah.

18:49 Pete: Okay. What, can you give an example? Like what, what sort of thing?

18:54 Russ: Well, there's the, the story that sort of, the quintessential story about that is the story, story about a woman of called Fran. And I've told the story sort of a lot, and maybe you, have you read about the Fran story? I have,

19:05 Pete: I have, I have come across Fran, actually, but if you don't mind repeating it, just so I've got a quick...

Fran

19:11 Russ: Fran, Fran was a seriously disturbed woman, sometimes called schizophrenic, sometimes called borderline personality or whatever, what, let's call her *seriously disturbed*: multiple suicide attempts, the scars, the hospitalizations, disruptions of her life, a se seriously disturbed woman. And, and it turned out that she had multiple imagery, *she said*. She said she had 10 images at a time. And she told me about these images, which were, which were brightly colored and illuminated and words and, and whatever. And they were mostly terrible. Things like she would be sitting at a dining room table, and her father was telling her that she was, that he, she, he wished she never had existed. And the, the, the image is totally detailed, like she can see past her into the kitchen where her mother is standing at the sink looking back at this image and at the, uh, looking at the scene.

20:05 And at the same time, she had a image of her daughter sitting on the bed in her bedroom telling her that she was a terrible mother. And at the same time, she had a image of the birthday cake that she had made for her daughter in the refrigerator. *And at the same time*, she had this, so she could have like 10 of these images all at once. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And *so she said*, and, and of course I would, this was early on in my careers. And, and so I wondered whether that was really true. And, and because she would say that I could see this whole, the whole thing.

20:40 And so the image that they, the image that really caught my attention in, in my 1980 way, or whatever was she said she had an image of a department store ad, a Mervyn's department store, which is like JCPenney or whatever, [Pete: Yeah.] and,

uh, that was selling gold chains. And it had a, an array of, of, uh, teddy bears on a, on the newspaper page. And, and they were draped with gold chains. [Pete: Yeah.] And so I asked her, well, at the moment of the beep, which one of these teddy bears and gold chains were you looking at? And she says, "well, I see them all." I said, "well, I understand that you see them all, *but* at the moment of the beep, *which one* were you looking at?" And she, I couldn't get her to say she was looking at just one. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And so I said, well, when you shift your gaze, I, I was conducting this interview in McDonald's. And, uh, and I said, will you shift your gaze for me to that, that Coke cup over there on that table? Do you feel yourself sort of lose me and zoom in on that cup over there?

21:37 And she says, "no, when I move my gaze over there, the cup comes in the center, but there's no feeling like zooming in or latching onto her or whatever," which is, which I thought was the way figure/ground phenomenon worked. And, and she denied having any of that. So I drew her the, the faces vase ambiguous [Pete: Yeah.] figure, (you know, that, you know, that figure? [sketches it with his fingers] [Pete: Yeah.]) out, I, I drew her on my, on my notepad, one of those things, and asked her what she sees. And she says, "well, I, I see, uh, two faces and a vase." And I said, "I understand that, but uh, *right now*, which *one* of those are you seeing? Are you seeing the faces or the vase?" And she said, "I'm seeing both of them." And there's no, [Pete: Um-hmm.] I couldn't, I couldn't get her to, to say anything about alternation. There was no alternation in her experience.

22:24 Pete: Yeah. Interesting.

22:25 Russ: And, and so the next time I saw her, I brought back some professionally drawn ambiguous figures, and she denied that they alternated for her. And so [Pete: Mm-hmm.] that left me to wonder, well, *does she not understand what alternation means* or what, what's the deal? Is this a language deal? Or a perceptual deal? Or whatever. [Pete: Yeah.] So she said, at the end of that interview, she said, "can I have these, these pictures?" And I said, "sure."

22:49 She called me up an hour later and she said, "well, I went back to the bank where I work, and I showed these pictures to my friends at the bank, and they alternate for them." And then she proceeded to give me a perfectly lucid definition or description of alternation *for her coworkers*, [Pete: Yep.] and said, "*but that doesn't happen for me.*" [Pete: Yeah.] So it was, it was not a language problem. It was something, it was something else.

23:11 And then she said, "and I discovered why I piss off my coworkers. We, we, I said, should, she should say, my coworkers and I discovered why I piss them off all the time." And the, and, and I said, "well, why is that?" And she said, "well, because one of our jobs is to stand at a counter and count money; and I can do that and, and engage them in conversation at the same time. And it causes them to lose count, and that pisses them off. [Pete: Aah! Yeah.] And furthermore, I discovered, much to my surprise, and my coworker's surprise that while I have three television sets in my living room, they only have *one*. And I watch all three television sets at the same time. *Not* alternating back and forth, but I watch them all. [Pete: Yeah.] And *they* find that hard to believe." [Pete: Yeah. Yeah.]

23:57 So the next time, or so, she said, "I, well, I, I haven't been entirely honest with you about my samples." And I said, "well, I would say I'd like, I'd like to know about

them to the extent you wanna tell me about 'em." And so she said, "well, I, I've had an image of myself committing suicide." [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And, and that didn't surprise me, given her history, which, so I, so I asked her the kinds of questions that I would've asked *you* about any visual image that *you* were having. And so she said, and with my probing, basically, "well, this image starts by seeing her bathroom from the outside." And so I'm asking, "well, is the door open or closed? And does it open from the right or to the left and, and, uh, and color, or black and white or motion, or whatever?"—the same kinds of questions that I would ask have asked you about your imagery. [Pete: Yeah.]

24:45 And the answer. And the answer was, "it opened in inward and to the right" and whatever. And then the next scene in this image was her medicine cabinet. [Pete: Hmm.] And she sees the medicine cabinet, which is already open, but her hand is going towards it. And, and I'm asking the questions like, "well, is this the, like your real medicine cabinet?" And she's saying, "well, it's, it is my real medicine cabinet. It's, it's got everything in it that my medicine cabinet has, but there's more stuff in my real medicine cabinet that's sort of like a simplified medicine cabinet" or whatever. [Pete: Yeah.] And then she *knows* (she doesn't see herself), but she knows that she has taken some downers and slit her wrists, and she's now dying on the floor. And so I'm asking, "well, from what perspective do you see yourself dying on the floor?" And her head's to the right and her body's off, off to the left, and, and, and "is, is in color, black and white?" and it's in color, and it's in the perspective is as if viewed from the, the bathroom doorway or whatever. [Pete: Yeah.]

25:39 And, and I can, and, and it's in color and, and it seems like it's accurate color, except I'm, I'm paler, I'm whiter than I, than I think I really am, or whatever, in this picture.

25:53 And so then we made a suicide agreement that if she felt suicidal, that she would call me or whatever, and, and agreed that (that was on Friday in, in McDonald's) and we would, we would agree on that. We met on, met on Monday, and she came back on Mon, on Monday and said, I've had the best ex best weekend that I've ever had, or as long as I can remember. And the, and the, and the, her, her ability, her inner-experiential abilities had changed dramatically. (Now I'm finally answering the question that you asked.) And, uh, the, her experience had changed dramatically in that now she *did have* figure/ground phenomenon. So when I drew her the faces and bass, they did alternate for her. [Pete: Yeah.] And she only had one image or maybe two images at a time instead of ten. And, and the downside for her was that she could no longer watch three TVs at a time. She could only watch one. [Pete laughs] And that was a big, a big disappointment for her, because she had spent much of her life watching three TV programs, and now she couldn't do that.

26:56 Pete: Yeah.

26:58 Russ: But that was a dramatic change in her experience, and *I think* as a result of inner ex of, uh, of DES kind of a deal. So, so my understanding of that, (and this is a, $N = 1$ study, so, y'know, you never can be sure about anything) [Pete: Yeah.] but my guess, my *guess* about that is that, well, she was this, it's a fact that she was sexually in all, all manner of other abused as a child. And I think she, *she learned* not to see anything [puts his hand in front of his eyes] while she was growing up. It was so she would never, she would never look at anything *ever* straight on. [Pete: Yeah.] And

then when *I* came along and *made her* go one step at a time through things that were the *most highly problematic*, [Pete: Yeah.] like this visual image of herself committing suicide, tell me about this detail and that detail and this detail, and that detail, she *found* that it was possible to look at something, one, look, look at something straight on, one. [Pete: Yeah.] one aspect at a time: to go from this detail to that detail, to that other detail. And *that*, I *think*, changed her experience dramatically.

28:10 Pete: Yeah.

28:12 Russ: But it wasn't because it wasn't because she set out to say, well, lemme see whether I can get this figure/ground phenomenon.

28:18 Pete: Yeah. Yeah. Just happened.

28:21 Russ: May, *maybe* if we were smart enough, if, if we knew enough about inner experience (which I don't think we do, but if we did), then we *might* have been able to diagnose, Fran, *well, you don't have any figure/ground phenomenon! We gotta get you some figure/ground phenomenon, and this is how we're gonna do that.* Maybe in, maybe if we had a mature science of inner experience, we would know how to do that kind of thing. But we're pretty long way away from that.

Russ's DES history

28:47 Pete: Um, which actually brings me to this, one of my main questions, which is how you came to DES.

28:54 Russ: How do I, what,

28:56 Pete: How did you come to DES in the first place? It, it seems to me that this is something that's lacking in the science, but you thought that for decades, but you *acted on* it as well. What was the, what was the reason?

29:10 Russ: Well, there, there's several stories that I could tell about that. What, while I was, while I was an engineer (in a previous lifetime, or my first career was a, as an engineer) [Pete: Yep.] And I was, I, I, I read an article that I believe was in *Forbes* magazine, which was about a guy who, about an executive who was saying, this is what, this is what executives should... *The only thing executives really have is time. And so they gotta know what's happening to their time.* They, [Pete: Yeah.] this guy was saying. So you should have your secretary look in on you every half hour and write down what it is that you're doing. And then when, and once y'know what it is that you're doing, then you should figure out, well, what can I delegate? And what's really important? And, and [Pete: Yeah.] and I, I thought, *now that was really smart. Except*, I thought, (A) you shouldn't have your secretary looking in on you because you're gonna be places where your secretary isn't. And [Pete: Yeah.] And, and you shouldn't be doing it every half an hour. You should be doing it at random. [Pete: Yeah.]

30:09 So I knew in 1967 or whenever that was, that random sampling of something of what it is that you, what you do, I thought was an important deal. There, that that

was at a time before beepers. There weren't any beepers there, there weren't any handheld electronic devices back then. But that's what I knew. I, I knew, I knew I needed such a, such a thing. And, and then, so that's one story that I would tell, which is sort of formative for me.

30:45 And then the second career that I had was as a trumpet player. [Pete: Huh! I didn't know that!] And, uh, and I, I, I had envisioned myself as being a classical trumpet player, orchestral trumpet player. [Pete: Yeah.] And, and that was Vietnam time. And so the only way to get from where I was, which was at the, the first insight I told you, I, I was working at a company building nuclear weapons or whatever, and so that was keeping me out of the Vietnam War because I was a, I was needed in the nuclear industry, I guess you would say. [Pete: Yeah.]

31:20 And, and, but, but I wanted to be a trumpet player. So I quit there and joined The Army Band. The Army Band, which the army has three what they call "special bands." And the, The Army Band is the one that's in Washington DC. (So, or it's actually across the river and in, uh, Arlington, Virginia. [Pete: Mm-hmm.]

31:41 But my, my job eventually in the Army band became playing Taps in Arlington Cemetery for people who had been killed in Vietnam. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And so I would sit in my car in the Cemetery, waiting for the next funeral, and then I'd, when the time came, I would get out and stand under a tree somewhere, play taps, and get back in my car and wait for another couple hours until the next funeral arrived.

32:01 So I went, I, I would go to the Arlington County Library and put a stack of books in my car and read the kinds of things that engineers (which is my first career) don't get a chance to read. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And, and so I was reading in history and psychology and sociology and mathematics and philosophy and whatever, and eventually discovered that I had read the entire psychology literature—all the books in psychology. So these are all the original sources as curated by, by the Arlington County librarians. And, um, so all of those [books] started out as, *I'm gonna tell you something really interesting about people*. And I would get to the end of those and say, well, that wasn't very interesting. It was, it was some *theory* about people, [Pete: Yeah.] but it, it wasn't that, it wasn't really about individual people.

One Boy's Day

32:53 Except for one, except for *one* book called *One Boy's Day*, which is a book that most modern people haven't heard about. But back in the sixties or fifties, this guy's a social psychologist followed a kid, like a 10-year-old kid whose name I forget, or an 8-year-old kid or whatever. [Pete: Yeah.] Followed him around for an entire day and wrote down what he, what he did. And he wrote, and he wrote a, wrote a book about that called *One Boy's Day*.

33:19 Pete: I'm just looking it up. Um, a specimen record of Roger Barker.

33:23 Russ: Yeah. Roger Barker is the guy.

33:25 Pete: There we go.

33:27 Russ: And I, and I thought *that was very interesting*, because it was gonna tell us about this kid.

33:33 Pete: Yeah.

33:33 Russ: But, *but* it wasn't as interesting as it could have been, because what I really wanted to know about was what, what the, what, what that book *says* is that, that the kid (his name was, I wish I could remember, but I can't), would.. he, he threw his jacket down and, and then the, the, the girl, Jenny (call her Jenny) picks it, picks it up and throws it into a bush. And, and he runs over there. And, and I, and I wanted to know what he was thinking when he was doing that, or, [Pete: Yeah!] And, uh, so the, and so, so one problem was that it was, it was just about his behavior, not about his thinking, cuz I thought thinking was interesting. And, and, uh, and it was a whole book about *one day*, and I thought random sample, random sampling would solve that problem. So in the reading of that book, I thought *what we really need to do is to randomly sample thoughts*.

34:27 Pete: Mm-hmm.

34:29 Russ: But there wasn't any way to, there wasn't any way to do that. There was. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And then, so

34:36 Pete: Go ahead. Sorry. [inaudible]

The beeper

34:40 Russ: So then, so the ne the next, the next step was I, I, leaving out a few intermediate steps. But anyway, I, I eventually decided to go to graduate school in clinical psychology. And, and in the truck, on the way to that site, to the, to the University of South Dakota, which is where I got my PhD, on, in the truck, on the way, I figured out how to build a beeper there. So I invented a, I invented a random beeper.

35:11 Pete: And when you say you figured out, like, in, in, in your head, or you literally were playing with...

35:11 Russ comments: The in-the-truck invention was this: Suppose you had an electronic counter that counted from 0 to 3600, and when it got to 3600 it started a beep. Suppose you had an oscillator (a clock) that once-a-second emitted an electronic pulse that went into the counter. Then at the end of 3600 seconds (= one our) it would cause a beep to start. Further suppose that you had another oscillator (a fast one) that emitted a pulse every microsecond (one million pulses per second). Make that fast oscillator drive the counter whenever the beep is occurring. Thus while beeping, the counter would count from 0 to 3600, and back to 0 and up to 3600, and back to 0 and up to 3600 several hundred times per second. Pressing the button to stop the beep turns off the fast oscillator, which would leave some number between 0 and 3600 in the counter. (That number is pretty darn random, because the counter was cycling much faster than any regularity in the human reaction time necessary to stop the beep. For illustration, let's assume that the random number in the counter was 3000.) The beep stops, and, again, the clock oscillator takes over, incrementing the counter every second, and 10 minutes (=

3600 – 3000 = 600 seconds) later it beeps again. Stopping *that* beep will cause the new process to begin at some *newly chosen* pretty-darn-random number; thus this process will produce a portable electronic random interval generator. That's what I knew in the truck; I was pretty sure all those necessary electronic components existed; all I had to do when I got to Vermillion was to figure out how build it.

That was pretty early on in the history of portable electronic devices. For context, that in-the-truck invention of the beeper in August, 1973; the world's first successful handheld scientific calculator (the HP-35) had been introduced in 1972 (and sold for \$395, or \$3100 in today's dollars!); the first successful personal computer (the Apple II) wouldn't become available until 1977.

35:16 Russ: <crosstalk>, I figured, I figured, I figured out in, in my head what you had to do to build a beeper. Okay. So I was, I was an aeronautical engineer. I was not an electrical engineer, but I knew, [Pete: Yeah.] I knew some stuff about, [Pete: Yeah.] about electronics, having worked for, worked as an engineer for a while. And, uh, so I, I, I figured out what the logic was on how to build a beeper. [Pete: Yeah.] And so I, so I knew by the time that I got to Vermilion, South Dakota, that I knew how to build a beeper. I didn't, I hadn't *built* one, I had never built anything actually electronic at all. But I, but I knew how I, I knew enough to know that I knew how to do it. [Pete: Yeah.] And so I said to Carl Sipprelle, who was the director of clinical training, when he asked me what I wanted to do, I said, "I want to build a beeper and randomly sample thoughts." [Pete: Hmm!] And he said, "well, I don't think it's possible to build a beeper." So he was a couple of generations ahead of, ahead of me. And, y'know, electronic devices weren't, didn't figure in his imaginations as much as they did in mine. And, uh, [Pete: Yeah.]

36:18 So I built a beeper in the first month that I was there, and, and started using it. And I gave questionnaires as people would do. So now I had a beeper, and I would give a question, I would, when it beeped, you had to fill out a questionnaire. And then [Pete: Yeah.] And then it beeped again and you filled out another questionnaire, which people are still doing, I shouldn't say still doing, but they're *now* doing and calling it ESM or EMA. [Pete: Yeah.] It's very similar to what I was doing in 19 73, 74. [Pete: Mm-hmm.]

36:46 Pete: Has, has the, has the method stayed the same, more or less since then? So you, you built a beeper front of me. [holds up the beeper] It's more or less the same thing.

36:58 Russ: Well, that's the third or fourth generation beeper that I built. So now, it, now the... So I patented the method that I had for, for making random intervals. And the, and the beeper that I now use doesn't use that same method anymore.

37:12 Pete: Yeah.

37:13 Russ: But the, but the, but, but the logic, the, the lo, the mechanics of the beeper are pretty much the same thing from the outside. [Pete: Yeah.] It delivers a beep; the beep continues until you push the button.

37:25 Pete: So you, you're still delivering the same thing, isn't it? Which is a random beep every hour. [Russ: Yeah.] Okay. Yeah.

37:29 Russ: And the, the difference is that by, so I, I started giving questionnaires, and by the time I... [pause] So I real, I realized fairly early on (while I was, while I was still a graduate student) that people didn't know what they were talking about when they asked the, so I was given Likert scales, and they were skill filling out a, on a scale from 1 to 5, how much has your thought about sex? Or how much have you thought about the past? Or, or how much have you thought about food? Or whatever. And, and, and I just didn't by the, by the, by the end of the 1970s, let's put it this way, I knew that people didn't know what they were talking about when they asked, when they filled that questionnaire. [Pete: Yeah.] And the reason that I knew that is that I *asked* them, "well, when you're filling out this questionnaire for me, what do, what do you mean when you say, y'know, this thought was a, a 4 about sex?" or whatever. [Pete: Yeah.] And, and they just, they just didn't know the answer to that question. And so I thought, well, *it is not sustainable to build a science when the basic knowledge is not solid.*

38:42 Pete: Yeah, yeah.

38:43 Russ: And so then I, then, so I applied myself to thinking about, *well, what could you do?* And so by, by, by the end of the seventies, 1978, I think you might say, something like that, I had decided that what I really wanted to try to do was to *describe* what people's inner experience actually was, at a moment. Not according to a questionnaire, but to, but to, by talking to people, in a, and, and helping them to describe their experience in what I would later call *high fidelity*. And so I've been doing basically the same thing as that since the end of the 1970s. I've, I think I've gotten better at it. I've learned, I think I've learned some stuff across the years about how to ask those questions and what counts and what doesn't count or whatever. But the, but the main thrust of it goes back to the seven, end of the seventies.

Trust

39:38 Pete: Yeah. Well, um, you, you, you place a lot of trust into your, in your beep-ees (for a better word). Um, because obviously they, they're, they're describing things like, at the beginning of this process, I, I couldn't describe any of my inner experience *at all*. And with your help, I got better at it to the point that it, by the end, it seemed very easy and comfortable to talk about, y'know, um, a visual, a *visual experience without seeing* and things like that, which just would've seemed crazy to me at the start. Um, but what, what gives you confidence in the fact that none of us are making it up? Like, is, is it just the fact that you have, you've had so many interviews now, there is a consistency between them, because, because it seems to me, I'm, I'm obviously far from the first person to talk about *seeing without seeing* with you. So you, that presumably gives you a baseline where you can think, okay, yeah, Pete isn't making this up, even though it's weird to Pete. Is, is that right? Is that, what, is that where the trust comes from on your side?

40:46 Russ: So trust is, trust is an important and interesting thing. So I think it's quite possible... [coughs] Excuse me. I think it's quite possible that Pete, three or four months ago,

had a conversation with his editor, and his editor says, “y’know, I don’t trust that Hurlburt guy! What I would like you to do, *Pete*, is to go in and *pretend* that you are a trustworthy guy [Pete: Yeah.] and see whether you can dupe Hurlburt into believing you [Pete: Yeah.] and see what, and, and see what happens.” [Pete: Yeah.] I think, I think that is *entirely* within the realm of possibility. [Pete: Yeah.] And I, and I think I’m pretty defenseless against that. So I think, I think you pro I think you probably could have done that. [Pete: Yeah.] And you probably could have, you could have, you could have won that battle in the sense that you could have convinced me that you were telling me the truth [Pete: Yeah.] when in fact, when in, when in fact you had an entirely separate a, agenda. I, I think that’s entirely private [“private” is misspoken] I think that’s entirely possible. I *doubt* that it’s true, but I, but I,

41:51 Pete: It’s not! IT’s not! Nothing like that!

41:52 Russ: But I don’t think, but I would, but I would never know. [Pete: Yeah.] But the, but the, and, and so I, I am not, I have, think I’ve said a couple of times to you, I’m *not* a mind reader. I have, I, yeah, I am definitely *not* a mind reader. But what I, what I think happens instead is that *Pete* is, is mildly interested at the outset with what Hurlburt has to say and when, and, but when in interacting with, with Russ, he, *Pete* finds that Russ knows what he’s doing and that he’s, that he has, he, that he knows how to ask questions which allows *me* to try to tell me about my inner experience in a way that feels high fidelity *to Pete*.

42:39 Russ: And then as, and, and that’s a gradual thing. It wasn’t, didn’t happen on the first day, and it didn’t happen on the second day. And it’s a gradual thing. And, *and if* *Pete*, I think is a typical person, *Pete* recognizes that this is a rare opportunity for him, that he’s probably not gonna have an opportunity to have somebody as skilled as Russ is asking him these kinds of questions. Let’s see, let’s find out what my experience really is like. [Pete: Yeah.] And so I think people, I think people natural, most people naturally are interested in what their inner experience is. And if, and if I can be even just sort of halfway good at it, helping somebody get there, they’re gonna want to, they’re gonna wanna participate in that.

43:24 Pete: Yeah. Yeah.

43:26 Russ: And the, and the, and the, the, the, and, and one other important thing about that is that *it’s entirely on Pete’s turf*. I have not invoked any psychological measures. [Pete: Yeah.] So we, we haven’t decided whether *Pete* is *extroverted* or, or, or has *high ego strength* or whatever. [Pete: Yeah.] That has not entered into our conversation. What’s entered into our conversation is something which *Pete* has *intimate access to*. And so *Pete* is at every moment of our interviews and the position to say, *are we getting at what my experience is, Pete’s* experience was at that moment? [Pete: Yeah.] So *Pete* is the judge of that. And my, my job is to, is to help *Pete* be a better judge of it.

44:14 Pete: Does there ever come a moment in your interviews though, where you are, you think, oh, this person is, is entering into this in good faith? They’re not exaggerating,

they're not lying, y'know, or, or, or something between them because they're talking about things that they couldn't have known about. Because, cuz like I said, I, before this, I would not have talked about, um, a, a visual experience without seeing, I would just not have talked about that. But presumably that's reassuring to you to hear that from me, because then, you know, because you've done so many interviews before, you know that basically I'm not bullshitting, y'know?

44:51 Russ: Well, I would, I would say *yes, I think*. So I think I am sensitive to people reactions when they, when they say, "this is weird. I wouldn't have believed that it was possible, but I'm gonna tell you about it anyway," [Pete: Yeah.] and if they seem honest about that, and then they tell me about it anyway, that seems like pretty good evidence that we're going in the right direction. [Pete: Yeah.] Or if people are embarrassed, "I'm, I'm, I'm embarrassed to tell you about this [Pete: Yeah.] cuz it doesn't fit my self-con, self-concept or whatever I'm, but I'm gonna tell, but I'm gonna tell you *anyway*." And when they, when, when they do, so they have the same kind of hesitations or blushing, or nervousness or whatever that [Pete: Yeah.] seems to go along with genuine thing, then I think, well, this guy's probably telling me the truth.

44:51 Russ comments: The Fran story is revelatory in this regard, which is part of the reason that I think it is an instructive story. We *could* explain it by saying that Fran was sophisticated enough to have thought, prior to knowing anything about DES, *I think I'll pretend to have no figure/ground phenomena, and I'll make up some real-world ramifications (3 TVs, pissed off co-workers) and then I'll tell a suicide story and miraculously acquire the figure/ground ability—Hurlburt will fall for that hook line and sinker*. That is indeed a possible explanation, but Occam would roll over in his grave.

45:40 Pete: Yeah.

45:41 Russ: Yeah. So I think that, I think there are objective signs that I, that I attend to that *suggest* that Pete is telling me the truth.

45:53 Pete: Yeah.

45:54 Russ: But I think, but all, all that within the realm is: if Pete's a really good actor, he could probably convince, he could probably con me.

Objective; radically non-subjective

46:06 Pete: Yeah. Okay. Well, I, I have not been duping him! Um, I suppose that word *objective* is that, I mean, is it true to some extent that all psychology is subjective? Um, but is it true? I mean, you're talking about the insides of my head and the insides of other people's head. You literally cannot see that. If, if I were a detractor, I, I don't know if you have detractors, maybe we can talk about that. But

46:34 Russ: There's lots of detractors!

- 46:35 Pete: Okay. Well, well, I presume then in that case that one of the things they say is like, oh, this is just something you can't see. It's all made up. Um, y'know that there is nothing objective about this. Is that the, is that what they would say?
- 46:49 Russ: Yes, that is what they would say: *it's entirely, it is entirely subjective*. Yeah. I personally view it as *radically non-subjective*. Your experience is radically non-subjective. [Pete: Yeah. Yeah.] And the, so the, the, the different, the difference is that, that there, there is, there is *subjective* in the sense of, I think of myself as a nice guy, or I think of myself as a religious person, or I think of myself as a whatever those are, those I think *are* subjective. [Pete: Mm-hmm.]
- 47:24 What I think DES does is *radically not that*. So I would prefer to call that radical. W so what we did, so when, when, when, at the moment of the beep, you experienced something like a cone that, where you saw, uh, a word on the screen and another word in your imagination, and that seemed to have traveled some kind of a cone. That is an experience that is what I would call *radically non-subjective*, [Pete: Yeah.] that *Pete had* at a particular moment. It's *private* in the sense that *only Pete had it* and nobody else could have had it. So there are, there that is makes, it, makes it *difficult*. It makes the, makes the [Pete: Yeah.] work we have *challenging*. But it's says, but *that experience* is an objective (I don't, I don't particularly like the word objective. So that's why I use radically non subjective.) but it's a, it's an experience, it's an experience *that Pete had at a particular moment* that he's trying to describe in fi with, with fidelity. [Pete: Yeah. Yeah.]
- 48:28 And that, so that, that's ba, that's... So in a, in a fundamentally important sense, if you wanted to know what descriptive experience sampling is, is about, it's, it's what, *what can Russ, as a, as an ignorant mortal person, find out about Pete that is not just Pete's subjective impression about Pete?* Because I, I think, I think subjective impressions are, are, are more or less worthless, and not worthless, but they're, but they're subjective. They're not just... Like Pete's, y'know, Pete's, Pete's before, before sampling, Pete's subjective impression would be *I talk to myself a lot*. Yeah. And, and those subjective impressions are not true. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] Are not, they're, they're not, they're not adequate for, from a scientific doubting point of view, [Pete: Yeah.] which, which, which I fancy myself as having.
- 49:28 So the question is, *well, what is it that Pete does that is not subjective in that sense, but is, but yet is personal about Pete?* It's not just his, not just his height and 5-10, or 180 pounds, or whatever. Those are, those are objective things, characteristics, [Pete: Mm-hmm.] but they're not, they're not really *personal characteristics of Pete*. They're not, they're not about Pete *as Pete presents himself to himself*. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And so the, so, so DES is Hurlburt's view of *what can we find out about Pete that is not subjective?* And the answer is [Pete: Yeah.] well, what his experience was at a, at a particular moment. Yeah. Then we have to figure out how to get at that.
- 50:13 And it's, and it's, it is, so this, this conversation started, well, when, when I use the word *objective*, [Pete: Mm-hmm.] referring to Pete's embarrassment when he was telling me about some kind of a sample or whatever. And, and what I meant by *objective* there and what the science, what science means by *objective* is that if there were several different observations, or if we had a videotape, we could have video, we do have a videotape, we could have pointed, and a team of, of expert observers would've said, "well, yeah, Pete, Pete is demonstrating, uh, anxiety or

embarrassment at this particular moment.” [Pete: Yeah. Yeah.] That would be objective in the sense that it’s observable by other outside people.

50:56 Pete: Yes. Yeah.

50:58 Russ: Pete’s inner experience is *not* objective like that. So I, yeah, I, I, there’s no team of people who could have said, well, Pete’s got a cone-shaped transfer of this word to that word or whatever. That’s, yeah. So it’s not ob, so DES is not objective like that. But it *is* objective (almost) in the sense that *at least Pete* observed it.[Pete: Yeah.] Pete, *Pete apprehends that experience*. So if we can teach Pete to be a good, a good scientist, then, then he’s, he can (apprehend is the word I choose), but he can observe his own, he can observe his own inner experience. And as long as we can keep him talking just about that and not infect it with a bunch of other self-, self-serving kinds of stuff, then maybe there’s something worthwhile for science to know about in that.

51:50 Pete: Yeah. So it’s important...

51:53 Russ: It’s private. It’s private, it’s *private*, but it’s not *subjective*.

51:53 Russ comments: I think the heart of objectivity is direct apprehension. Some people think that objectivity requires public observation, but I don’t think that is right. If John Glenn radioed from orbit to mission control that his fuel gauge indicated that there was 11 pounds of fuel left for the manual control thrusters, no one would have said that Glenn was giving a *merely subjective* report because he was alone in the orbiting Friendship 7 capsule and therefore no one could verify his reading. We consider that meter reading objective because Glenn *directly observed* it. Of course we would need to verify his observation (from other telemetry data, knowledge of how long the thrusters had operated, how much fuel there was to begin with, etc.). But all of those, including Glenn’s observation, are objective bits that we need to organize into our understanding of the world.

DES is a first-person-plural science

51:58 Pete: Yeah. Okay. That makes a lot of sense to me. I, I, I guess another way of looking at it is maybe that, um, self-reporting and science can mix. Is that fair to say?

52:15 Russ: Well, you’re, you’re treading on important words for me, so I’m, so I, [Pete: Okay.] I do *not* consider what we have done *Pete’s self-reporting*.

52:26 Pete: Ah, okay! That’s interesting!

52:29 Russ: What I think that we have done is *Pete and Russ describing*.

52:38 Pete: So it’s a, and that’s a, it’s a collaborative, mutual thing.

52:42 Russ: DES from my point of view, is a first person, a *first-person plural* exercise. Pete is not, Pete is *not* self-reporting. That would be first-person *singular*.

52:54 Pete: Yeah.

52:54 Russ: This is *Pete and Russ* together [Pete: Yeah.] examining something that only Pete can directly apprehend. But it, but it, I'm a, I'm an *integral part*, an integral part of this thing. Pete would, Pete would probably not have described his meta-experience cuz he didn't have the vocabulary to do that. [Pete: Oh! Yeah, yeah, yeah.] Russ, *Russ* has that, *Russ* has that skill that he brings to that. Russ is *blind* in the sense that he can't see what's Pete going on, but he's, but he's got, got some, got some miles on him as far as, as far as inner experience is concerned. [Pete: Yeah. Yeah.] So, so Pete can babble on in a self-reporting kind of a way *to Russ*, and then *Russ* can try to help Pete speak in a way that gets beyond Pete's idiosyncratic in-his-own-bubble [Pete: Yeah.] way, way of way of dealing with things. Um, and, and, and, and he and Pete has had to, had to learn how to do that over many days' worth of sampling. [Pete: Yeah. Yeah.]

54:04 That's what I call the *iterative method*, which is part of the, part of what my contribution, if there is any to the, to the science, is: it *has to be* iterative.

54:04 Russ comments: You should *not* believe what Pete said about his inner experience before he had the skills to apprehend it. If you can watch Pete gradually acquire (that is, iteratively build) the necessary skills, then you can come to accept that probably what Pete is describing is faithful.

54:14 Pete: And so this, this idea, sorry, this idea that you said of almost like *teaching me to be a scientist*, that seems to be a crucial thing, y'know, because that is, that's me, but also that's new. You have to be the teacher. Um, it really does take two in that respect.

54:31 Russ: Yeah. When

54:32 Pete: I say teaching me to be a scientist, I mean teaching me to apprehend, y'know, I,

54:37 Russ: What I, what I think I taught you to do, to the extent that I taught you to do anything, what I think I taught you to do is to *be my eyes*, metaphorically speaking, [Pete: Yeah.] into your, into your experience.

54:37 Russ comments: Equally importantly, I helped you to teach *me to be your correspondent*, metaphorically speaking, to convey your experience to the outside world.

54:55 Pete: Yeah. Yeah.

54:56 Russ: And so a *scientist*, I'm not sure I made you a scientist, so maybe it made you a, a, a good scientist's, a scientist assistant or something like that. [Pete: Yeah, yeah.] But, but it, it is, it is more that it, it's more from my point of view, I feel like I've made *us* into a *scientific team*. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] So it's, it's not, it's not that you're *my assistant* or that I'm *your assistant*, but that *together* [Pete: Mm-hmm.] we can do things that neither one of us could do on our own. *You* can't [Pete: Yeah.] because,

because you're blind to your own idiosyncrasies. And *I can't* because I'm blind to your charac, to your [Pete: Yeah.] experiential characteristics. But *together* we *might* be able to say something worthwhile saying about Pete's experience.

64:56 Russ comments: That is why I consider DES to be a *first-person-plural* enterprise and why I object to locutions like "Pete reports...." It is not *Pete reporting*; it is *Pete and Russ describing*.

55:50 Pete: Russ, when, when you've spoken sort of throughout the weeks, you've made it sound, I hope this is fair to say, you've made it sound almost like you are a sort of lone operative in a way, but you've said you have many detractors, but you also sound like you are kind of, um, plowing this furrow alone. Um, is, is that right?

56:10 Russ: That is right.

Has DES caught on?

56:11 Pete: Has DES not caught on? Do, are there any students of yours that have? Because it, it just seems to me to be so *rewarding* and so sort of *intrinsically worth it* that I'm surprised.

56:22 Russ: So what, what I, I think so if you interviewed my students [Pete: Yeah.], my ex, my ex-students, students have gone on, I think they would tell you they were very influenced by DES, and they. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] and they apply DES principles in whatever work they do. So many of them have gone to be clinical psychologists one way or one place or another. And I think they would, I think they would say they feel themselves to be better interviewers than their fellow clinical psychologists because of the interviewing skills that they learned doing DES. [Pete: Yeah.] But, but none of them are direct practitioners of DES. [Pete: Um-hmm.] There are, I don't think I, I think it's fair to say there are no, there, there are, there are no real *bona fide* DES practitioners out there other than me. Which is, which is, which is surprising to me, (A) it's surprising to me because I thought, when I wrote my first book, which was 1990 I think, I thought, well, there's, there's, I've just, I've just talked myself out of a job, here. I've told people what they need to do, and, uh, then they're, they're gonna do it, and I'm gonna be outta work! That, [Pete: Yeah.] that, that isn't what hap, what, what has happened, which is surprising to me. And I haven't, I've never quite figured out why that is.

57:45 Pete: Yeah.

57:45 Russ: But, but I think, I think what's happened is that the, my students have gone out into the real world, and the real world does not remunerate DES, [Pete: Uhhuh <affirmative>] so they, they, they have to, they have to make their way through the real world of, of financial whatevers. [Pete: Yeah.] And, and, and DES is too slow moving for that. So

58:12 Pete: What, why doesn't it remunerate? You just said it's too slow moving. But is it fundamentally cuz in this role of psychology, people say, fix me, or what's wrong

with me? Or they don't ask sort of longitudinal questions about how they think? Is, is that why it's not remunerated? Is that

58:29 Russ: Well, in the university community, I think it's, it is just too slow.

58:33 Pete: Yeah.

58:34 Russ: I mean, we spent 10, 20 hours together, probably. Not, not necessarily together, but including the time. Including the time. And, well, for, for me, it's more like 40 hours or 60 hours or something when, when you're considered putting together the transcripts and whatever of, of your... So I've got a, I've got a big investment *into one guy*. [Pete: Yeah.] And, and that is, that is not the usual way of, you've gotta have two papers a year every year if you're gonna get tenure and another two papers a year, or four papers a year if you're gonna get a promotion or whatever, that, that kind of, that kinda stuff is, is, is difficult.

59:18 Pete: Yeah.

59:19 Russ: Yeah. But the, the risk, the risk of there not being more, of, more of me, more people out there doing something like the DES, is, is that it makes it, it makes it possible. And maybe even likely and probably even true that the, what we have done is sort of idiosyncratically Russ-Hurlburt-ian.

59:39 Pete: Yeah.

59:41 Russ: And I work against that in a variety of different kinds of ways. But, but I don't think I can escape it.

59:49 Pete: Hmm.

59:51 Russ: Y'know, most, most of the time (*almost all* of the time actually, you're an, you're more or less an exception), we do co interviewing. So there would've, there would've been the three of us in the room rather than just two. And in our, in our Zoom calls, it was just you and me. That's the *exception*. [Pete: Right.] *By far* the exception. Most of the time it's me and a student and you, or me and some other observer and you. Or, and, and that is the contract that, that... The contract that the, that the other two of us would have (the not Pete) so, so if we'd, if we'd had a third person in the room, the contract that that *third person and, and Russ* would've had, would've been, *if you disagree with what Russ is saying, you gotta say so*. And, and if you are, if you have a way to go that you think is different from, or better than, or whatever that than Russ is doing, *you've gotta say you, you gotta say that*.

1:00:39 Pete: Yeah. Yeah.

1:00:42 Russ: So that, y'know, to the extent that I can, I can encourage my collaborators actually to *do* that, then well then that's gonna reduce the idiosyncratically *Russ* portion of this process. But...

1:00:54 Pete: Yeah.

1:00:56 Russ: But it would've been, it would've been better for me if, if, if from my point of view, if, if people had understood what's really at stake here, which is, from my point of view, sort of the basics of all clinical psychology or [Pete: Hmm.] whatever. I mean, I think you, you used as the example autism and depression and anxiety, I think. And, and, and we know precious little about what the, what those experiences are like—we, the science, clinical psychology, psychiatry, whatever.

1:01:30 Pete: Mm-hmm.

1:01:33 Russ: Y'know, we give you, if you're, if you, if you show up at a, at a psychiatrist's door and say, "I'm anxious," he's gonna give you some anxiolytic drug. [Pete: Yeah.] He's never gonna have known what your experience is. You are never gonna have known what your experience is. You're never gonna have known what the, what the drug *did* to your experience.

1:01:33 Russ comments: The model I am considering is to imagine Pete *prior to sampling* being asked to describe his experience to a psychiatrist. Pete just didn't know what his experience was like.

1:01:51 Pete: Yeah.

1:01:53 Russ: That, in the long haul, is not sustainable from my point of view.

1:01:57 Pete: Yeah. Good point. Um, so once I was gonna ask is, is there any renewal of interest in what you're doing? Cuz obviously Michael Pollan's written this book and has gone through this experience. I'm writing it up now. Um, but also I'm thinking about AI, y'know, there's a lot of people thinking about thinking as it were, um, at the moment, it seems is your time now, I guess is what I'm asking?

1:02:30 Russ: So I think I, I think since, since the, since the beginning of my career [Pete: Mm-hmm.] when I was a wild-eyed radical because the, to be thinking about anything that smelled of consciousness or whatever was *way out of bounds* in psychology when I started. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] And, and I'm, I'm no longer considered a wild-eyed radical. I'm pretty much in the center of the, of the field. Not any, not everybody's doing it, but *most* everybody thinks that what I'm doing is worth trying to do. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] So that's, that's good, I guess you'd say. [Pete: Yeah.] And, but, but, but nobody or hardly anybody, maybe nobody is investing in what it need, what you, what you need to do in order to do it. [Pete: Yeah.] So they'll... Most everybody would agree that what I would do is interesting and, but not, not very many people, if any, can then propagate that back into their own life world, whatever.

1:03:35 Pete: Yeah. Yeah,

Consciousness and AI

1:03:36 Russ: Now the *AI deal*, I think is, is gonna disrupt that in, in some important way, [Pete: Hmm.] because the, the A, the AI, the, the, *the* big argument in AI or discussion in AI is, is, is, *is AI conscious?*

1:03:54 Pete: Yeah.

1:03:54 Russ: And that's an important question, but it, and, and, *and* I think eventually it will highlight, well, we, we, we really don't know what's going on in *people*, let alone what's going on in *Claude*. [Pete: Yeah.] And, uh, and, and, and so the, the, the char the, the scientists who are speculating about whether, whether Claude is conscious, don't have a clue about whether *Pete's* conscious, [Pete: Hmm.] or whether what (I think) what, what, [Pete: Yeah.] what *Pete's* inner experience actually is like. Y'know, they'll give you some definition of *conscious* or whatever, and they'll, they'll say, y'know, if we give you this much propofol, then you're not conscious or whatever. But it's, it's really heavy-handed by comparison to what actually passes through Pete's consciousness.

1:04:45 Pete: Yeah.

1:04:46 Russ: And I *think* that AI is going to make that apparent. But I also thought that in 1990, that everybody would've thought this by 1995. So I've, I'm, uh, I'm, I don't see myself as much of a, having much of a crystal ball.

1:05:10 Pete: But can you ever see yourself, or would you like to like effectively interview Claude, um, presumably far more for sophisticated Claude, but DES on an AI to find out whether it's conscious or whether it's shares styles of experience with people. Could you see yourself doing that? Would you like to do that?

1:05:27 Russ: Well, I'm actually involved with a group that's, that's trying to, that's *using Claude*, actually using Claude to Okay. To try to make a DES interviewer. So to, to try to make a, so they, they've scraped all the inter all the interviews that I've put on, on, on the web and, and I'm collaborating with them to try to improve the, the technique, but to make a Claude that that *could ask Pete* about his inner experience.

1:05:51 Pete: Okay. But never Claude that ask Claude,

1:05:57 Russ: Say that again?

1:05:59 Pete: I said, is there a Claude that can ask Claude? I guess what I'm saying is, is there a Russ that could ask Claude?

1:06:07 Russ: I haven't thought too much about that, but I, but I think there's no, there is no such thing as a moment for Claude, [Pete: Hmm.] I don't think. I'm a, I'm a, to the extent that I've thought about it, I don't think Claude is con, has anything like consciousness.

1:06:07 Russ comments: I think Claude does *not* have anything like what we found with Pete (multiple imagery, meta-experience, etc.) or that I have found with any of the other

of my DES participants. I think those moments are the basic apprehensions on which any study of consciousness should be based, so I would say that Claude does not have any of the basic features of consciousness.

1:06:22 Pete: Yes. Yes.

1:06:25 Russ: I think Claude, Claude can do remarkable things.

1:06:28 Pete: Yeah.

1:06:30 Russ: But, uh, but I, I, I think the, the world is *so far away* from understanding what consciousness really entails.

1:06:43 Pete: Yeah.

1:06:43 Russ: Because what, what, what, what I think I I, you, you started out by asking personality questions or, or, or diagnostic questions, or whatever. I think all, I think that stuff is totally important. What you *need* is thousands of people as, doing and as good as good or better than Russ doing things that are as good or better than DES aimed at, uh, at the myriad of problems that are out there, a, a myriad of questions that are out there about, that are personality-based or diagnostic-based or whatever. And bringing the, and bringing that, bringing those findings back to each other.

1:07:21 Pete: Yeah.

1:07:21 Russ: And we're, we *could do*, we could do that. We have the, and, and it could very well be that AI will, I'll will *help* us do that [Pete: Yeah.] in ways that I can't particularly imagine myself. But the, but it could be that it will. And *then* we might know something that would be, that would be interesting about whether Claude is conscious.

1:07:48 Pete: Yeah. Yeah.

1:07:49 Russ: But I don't, I don't consider myself a consciousness scientist, by the way, [Pete: Hmm!] because I don't think, I don't think, I'm not trying to describe *at all* what, whether Pete is *conscious*. Yeah. I'm trying to describe what happens in Pete's experience, which *I would think* that consciousness scientists ought to be interested in.

1:08:07 Pete: Yeah.

1:08:09 Russ: But, but I'm not trying to get at the kernel of Pete's consciousness, what [Pete: Yeah.] what is, what is or is not conscious.

1:08:20 Pete: Right. Um, Russ, I should say, from my perspective, that's kind of the thing I wanted from this conversation. Um, is there anything more that you would want?

1:08:31 Russ: Well, I want, I, so I have built a website [Pete: Yeah.] that we have talked about as being sooner or later appearing as like one of my collection of websites.

1:08:43 Pete: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

1:08:44 Russ: And I, and so this is sort of our next step of deciding whether that's a good idea. [Pete: Yes.] And, and, and then the next step would be, well, *when*? So I, so I, I could put that out tomorrow or, y'know, within a few days before your article comes out, or I could wait until *after* your article comes out. Yeah. And, or not, or I could do it not at all. Or whatever.

1:09:11 Pete: I, I have three things to say on this. Um, one is yes, absolutely let's publish. Um, two is, I still need to send you those notes, but it's only like micro tweaks to like my bio and things like that. So hopefully it will all be all of like five minutes work for you. But I will, I will send those any day. Uh, in fact I'll send them this weekend. And then three is, I think if we could wait until after my article's published, um, because pre presumably this, this debrief will be part of it as well. And I don't, I don't want to, y'know, preempt the questions, the quotes that are going to appear in the article, um, before, before the article comes out. But basically same day as my article is totally fine.

1:09:52 Um, which is not that far away. It actually will go to print on 4th of June. So I'll write it the next few days. I'm speaking to Michael as well on Wednesday, so I'm hoping to have it written by Thursday. I'll share a copy with you before it goes to print as well, just so you can check quotes and see that you're happy with it and things like that. Um, on 4th of June, it will go to press, and then it will be published on the 10th of June, is when it will be in the outside world. So if we could, if we could wait to publish the website until then, I'd be very grateful.

1:10:27 Russ: So *yes*, the answer to that is *yes*. The, and, and as far as the de, debrief interview, um, my plan is to make a transcript of that the same way as I made a transcript of the other interviews [Pete: Yeah.] and send and send that to you. And you could, I would say you would be in your right to say, *well put the rest of the stuff on the, on the web, but I don't want the, I don't want the debrief interview out there*. Yeah. I don't see why, I don't see why you would do that, but,

1:10:56 Pete: Oh yeah, no, I, my, my only, the only thing I, so obviously with a journalistic interview, um, you sort of don't want your, uh, interviewee to change what they're saying because they're conscious that they're on camera. Um, but I, I haven't got that sense from this. I've got everything I wanted. You've spoken very openly. I'm grateful. It's all fine. So we can, we can publish this debrief interview. [Russ: Mm-hmm.] And, and I don't need to ask anything beyond this debrief interview. Um, that, not that I can think of now anyway.

1:11:26 Russ: Okay. So I will, I will, I will do the transcript and that'll probably take me a couple of days to do it. And this holiday weekend for me, and this is our, our Memorial Day. And so I'm not exactly sure when I'm going to actually do that, but, but sooner or later, and then I will send it to you and you can use it so you'll have the quote quotations,...

1:11:48 Pete: Yeah, that will be great. Thanks, Russ.

1:11:50 Russ: ...what I said.

1:11:51 Pete: Um, the, the, the thing I'd be grateful for if, if you wouldn't mind sending this video before then, um, just so, um, cuz I mean, I, I can remember what a lot of what was said, but I can put placeholder quotes and things like that in, um, if that's okay.

1:12:08 Russ: So I, I can put the video on YouTube the way that all the other ones will be on YouTube. Is that good enough for you? Or, or would you prefer the video sent as a Google

1:12:18 Pete: Drive? Uh, do you normally send them as a Google Drive thing? Um, can that be done more or less immediately

1:12:27 Russ: By, *immediately* within a couple hours probably.

1:12:29 Pete: Oh, yeah. If, if that's okay, that would be perfect. And then I've just got something to work with. Um, [Russ: Okay.] Obviously, so yeah, sorry, I was gonna talk about workouts and stuff, but, um, but if I, I can write a lot of it without the quote from this interview and then put the interview quotes in earlier. But I'll start panicking if I get to Wednesday and I don't have access to this interview. Um,

1:12:52 Russ: Okay. Well, it, it, it takes, it takes, it takes a half an hour or so for, for Google or for, for *Zoom* to get the interview to me process

1:13:02 Pete: It.

1:13:02 Russ: Yeah. And then I've gotta be there to send it on to you, so within, within a while. Okay. Well, by the time you wake up tomorrow morning.

1:13:10 Pete: Oh. And if that doesn't interrupt your holiday either, Russ, like, I'd appreciate that.

1:13:14 Russ: That should be fine.

1:13:15 Pete: Lovely. Thank you. Thank you. And then I know I've got something.

1:13:18 Russ: Okay. *And* I would say if you, if you, if you in the process develop additional questions and you want to have debrief interview number 2 or whatever, lemme know.

Thanks

1:13:28 Pete: That's brilliant. Thank you. Um, and the only, the only other thing I'd say, Russ, first of all, this, this won't be, this is not the end because I'll be emailing you about the website and with my piece. And, um, but I do wanna say *thank you* for all this. Um, it really has been tremendous, um, rewarding, inspiring. I, I hope a good piece is

going to come out of it. But I've, I mean, you were saying how much time you've invested *in me*, uh, and I, I'm genuinely grateful for it. It's been so good. Thank you.

1:13:56 Russ: Well, I've, I've, I've enjoyed it myself, and I appreciate your, your willingness and I, I, and, and y'know, I, I, I don't *at all* want to color what you say. I want, I would like you to say what about what happened as, as it occurs to you to say it. So I don't, I don't, I don't foresee myself quibbling about any of that. If. [Pete: Mm-hmm.] If you misquote me, then I've, then I would probably, I might try to fix that or, [Pete: Yeah.] And if you reached a conclusion that would be different from mine, which you certainly willing to do. Well, you're certainly, it's within your right to do that, as far as I'm concerned. But then it would be within my right to say, *well, y'know, what Pete said is, isn't right*. Isn't right.

1:14:40 Pete: Yeah. Yeah. No, that's fine. Obviously I won't misquote you, but, and I also don't want to be wrong, so, yeah, that's why I'll send a copy before it gets published. So you can look at it with, from that sort of perspective.

1:14:52 Russ: Yeah. So for example, Michael Pollan said some things that, uh, that I thought were wrong or incorrect or what, whatever. And, and on my version of Michael Pollan website, [Pete: Yeah.] there's a, there's a, a place where I quibble with some of the things that he has said and

1:15:08 Pete: Okay. Oh, I, I will check that out in that, because on *his* website,

1:15:12 Russ: On my,

1:15:13 Pete: Oh, your version

1:15:14 Russ: On my IEO website, the *Inner Experience Of* website, yeah.

1:15:17 Pete: Okay, okay.

1:15:18 Russ: His version of that, the last page I think I call "Quibbles" or something like that, where, uh,

1:15:23 Pete: Okay.

1:15:24 Russ: I've

1:15:24 Pete: Actually seen that, seen some of the interviews, but yeah,

1:15:27 Russ: Where, and what he said is in, in, in the interview, in some of the interviews, I think are, are not exactly what I would've characterized it either, but I haven't, I haven't, I haven't said anything publicly about that, but [Pete: Yeah.] But I, but there are, there are a few things in the book that I think are not exactly right. And so I have that, that one line. I can show you what, where, where it is, so that y'know that you're there. [He launches the IEO website and navigates to the Pollan page.]

1:15:56 Pete: I'll definitely check this out. Thank you.

1:15:59 Russ: Let me share my screen. So this is the Michael Pollan interview from my, in my collection. Yeah. Got it.

1:16:14 Pete: Yeah.

1:16:14 Russ: And the last page of it is called *Quibbles*.

1:16:18 Pete: Yeah.

1:16:20 Russ: And so he wrote, he wrote, he wrote about it, and I, and I have some minor disagreements.

1:16:27 Pete: Yeah.

1:16:27 Russ: So that's there.

1:16:29 Pete: Oh, I'll definitely read that. Like I said, I've been through most of those videos, actually, I just, I didn't get to Quibbles at the bottom, so I'll definitely set that out.

1:16:37 Russ: Okay,

1:16:40 Pete: Great.

1:16:42 Russ: All right. Well, it's been my pleasure. And,

1:16:44 Pete: Uh, well, thank you, Russ. Um, and if I'm ever, uh, in your neck of the woods, I, I'm in Los Angeles in a couple of weeks actually, but, um, I, that's still quite far away from you, mentioned, but, uh, on the off terms, so I would, it would be lovely to meet up in person.

1:17:00 Russ: That would be great. I, I, I, I'd enjoy that.

1:17:04 Pete: Let's see. Right. Well, thank you. And we'll trade some emails very soon.

1:17:07 Russ: Sounds good.

1:17:09 Pete: Take care. Enjoy the extended weekend.

1:17:12 Russ: Thanks. See you.