

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY
Do I Really Have Internal Monologue?
Ryan Langdon Interview 2:
DES Sampling Day 2

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the May 26 interview with Ryan Langdon that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/bezTrkK-Kmk>. 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

AK = Alek Krumm

Ryan = Ryan Langdon

0:01 RTH: So do you have any questions about uh descriptive experience sampling or this process or whatever before we dive into em?

0:11 Ryan: I actually did, I had someone that had a question. And they wanted to know if you've ever experienced a patient that originally didn't have the ability to initiate self-speech, but then later on was able to like figure out how to do it, or teach themselves.

0:30 RTH: I would say I have never encountered such a thing. I'm not, I wouldn't say that I think that's not possible. I would say that in the way that we've been doing our work, we don't generally, we're not in a position to actually see that happen. [Ryan: Um hm.] You'd have to be sampling people over a long period of time or whatever or, or sampling people when some relatively dramatic event happened. And we don't aim at that. And so therefore we don't really, uh, get a chance to see it.

1:02 Ryan: But is it possible?

1:02 RTH: Yes.

1:05 Ryan: Okay. Good. That's the answer I was looking for. [Alek laughs.] Alright. Are we ready or...

1:11 RTH: I'm ready.

SAMPLE 2.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

1:12 Ryan: Alright. So first one, um, I was, so for most of this, I was studying today, so I just wanted to see how everything would work out while I was studying. [RTH: Okay.] And I was reading about embolic ischemia and thrombotic ischemia. And when the beeper went off, I was reading the word "embolic." Um, and I was saying the word internally to myself. Um, but I was also trying to like attach an image to it just to like help me remember it ('cause that's how I study). Um, but at the time of the beep, I didn't have

an image attached to it yet. But I do remember trying to attach an image at that time. Um, and there's music going on in the background and I was conscious of it, uh, I was *not* conscious of it at that time.

- 2:07 RTH: So that's just a fact of the universe--the music is playing?
- 2:10 Ryan: Yeah, there's just music in the background and I was pulled out, away from that external stimulus.
- 2:16 RTH: And would that be the same thing as say there's a chair, I'm sitting on a chair, but I'm not aware of that either? It's the fact of the universe, the chair's there, but I'm... [Ryan: Yes.] Okay. And, and so there are, if I'm understanding this correctly, there's sort of two things going on. I'm reading and innerly speaking "embolic," [Ryan: Yeah.] and I am trying to form an image of that without success.
- 2:44 Ryan: Yes. It's not without success. It just like I couldn't think of something at that time to attach. Like it takes a few seconds to like figure out something that that makes sense to me.
- 2:55 RTH: I meant that, I meant, I didn't mean without success *ever*. I meant [Ryan: Yeah.] not at this particular moment. [Ryan: Yes.] Okay. And uh, and are those equally present? Or is one more prominent than the other?
- 3:10 Ryan: Um, definitely me verbalizing the word, 'cause I was reading the word "embolic" when it, when it beeped, it was like a sentence in my notes. Um, and I was trying to visualize at the same time as I was reading a sentence.
- 3:26 RTH: So it's *possible*, I would say, to be more into the trying to visualize even though I'm not yet being successful. And it's also possible to be more into the speaking, the in, innerly speaking.
- 3:41 Ryan: I think I was, I was definitely more into the speaking aspect of it at that time.
- 3:47 RTH: And by "definitely more" do you mean 60-40 but I'm sure of it? Or 90-10 because it's a lot? Or...
- 3:53 Ryan: Um, I would, it's, it's high. It's 70-30 high, it's on the higher end.
- 3:59 RTH: Okay. So quite a bit more of your mental acuity, whatever that means, is into the speaking than is into the trying.
- 4:07 Ryan: Yeah. Usually like an image will pop up while I'm reading it organically instead of me like having to search for something to attach to it. Um, but I didn't at that time. There was nothing. All, it's, I knew what it was already. So like I didn't really have to put much mental effort into it. So I don't think I was really reading the sentence with as much focus. I was probably just skimming instead of actually like trying to put a lot of mental energy towards the studying at that time.

4:07 Russ comments: Ryan's statement here ("usually like an image will pop up...") is a self-theory, a general characterization of how he believes his experience *usually* operates. People's self-theories are sometimes 100% correct, sometimes 90% correct, sometimes 0% correct, etc. The interviewers will want to help Ryan to "bracket" this self-theory—to set it aside, to accept that it might be totally or partially true or false, to accept that self-theories are likely speculative. Across sampling days, if all goes well, Ryan will acquire the skill of describing his ongoing experiences without engaging in such speculative self-theorizing.

A large part of the art of the DES interview is to help Ryan acquire that skill. Here, for example, RTH could have pointed out the self-theoretical nature of what Ryan has said. RTH elects not to do that here—if self-theorizing is frequent for Ryan, RTH will get opportunities to have this conversation somewhere down the road. DES is a series of approximations, and RTH has let this critique of self-theory slide for now.

4:43 RTH: And so do you, so, uh, so I'm speaking "embolic ischemia," [Ryan: Um hm.] and at the moment, the beep catches me on "embolic." [Ryan: Um hm.] And do I understand myself as speaking that whole sentence, the whole sentence that I'm reading? As opposed to just... So it's not like I've singled out this word "embolic" and I'm saying *just that*. I'm saying the whole sentence, and the beep happens to catch me. [Ryan: Correct.] Okay. And I understood you to say this is in my own voice, I'm speaking....

5:13 Ryan: Yeah. In my voice at the same pace that I would read out loud.

5:19 RTH: And so is this experience, I'm basically reading it aloud except the words aren't coming out of my mouth? I'm...

5:24 Ryan: Correct. [RTH: Okay. It's the same...] I, I know that like when you read, you're not supposed to read every word individually, but I do that. And it's, it's a slow process, but I've always done it and I can't do it the other way.

5:38 RTH: Yeah. Some people do and some people don't. And, and most people who think they know about what most people do, I think probably don't really know. But, um, so was there any particular inflection of this? Or am I just reading sort of as a matter of fact...

5:55 Ryan: Yeah, I was just reading in my own voice. Um, I don't, I might be able to find the exact sentence and read it to you. How... [looks through papers]

6:04 RTH: Probably not necessarily. [Ryan: Okay.] The, uh, unless there's something in particular about the sentence.

6:11 Ryan: Nah, there's nothing that stood out really. It was pretty a relative experience for me.

6:17 RTH: Okay. And then, so let's turn our attention to the part about trying to form an image. I'm, I, and what I understand so far is that I'm, I actually apprehend myself as *trying* to form an image, that I'm, I'm working at it and that's in, before the footlights of my consciousness? Is that...

- 6:36 Ryan: Yeah. So I, I'm aware... So I'm reading at the same time as I'm trying to get a visual, a visual. So like I'm searching my brain for like something that reminds me of what an embolism is. And at that time I just, I didn't reach that.
- 6:56 RTH: And, and is there anything more to be said about what "searching my brain," I don't, what that means?
- 7:04 Ryan: I think... So I was trying to differentiate the difference between an embolism and a thrombus. And I was trying to visualize like something moving in a blood vessel as opposed to something that's stationary in a blood vessel. So I was just, I was trying to get an image that was memorable. And by searching it, it's probably just something that I've seen, whether like a video or something of like an animation of it. So I was just trying to search for something similar to that.
- 7:37 RTH: So "searching" could mean I'm *looking* for something but I'm not seeing *anything*. Or, or it could mean, I'm looking, I'm getting a glimpse of this and that's not right; and I got a glimpse of this and that's not right; and I get a glimpse of that other, and that's not right. Or I get a sort of a hazy image and I want to elaborate it, but it's not yet being elaborated. [Ryan: Um. Yeah.] Or something entirely different from any of those.
- 8:04 Ryan: No, I completely understand that. Um, so it was hazy at that time. So like I was trying to like get more definition to the image. So like I knew where I was going with it, but I didn't reach the final destin, final destination. Like I didn't know exactly what I wanted, but I, I knew the [inaudible] structure of, of the visual that I needed, if that makes sense.
- 8:31 RTH: And *that* description would make it seem like this is actually a *visual* experience: I'm *seeing something* (it's hazy and it's not yet differentiated or whatever), but it's a *visual* experience. Because *trying* actually is ambiguous enough. I could be trying and have absolutely no visual experience at all. [Ryan: Yeah.] But I understand you now to be saying "I'm trying and I'm creating *something* visual, it's just not yet adequate."
- 8:57 Ryan: Uh, imagine like clicking on a picture on the internet and you have slow internet service and it's slowly coming into picture. Or like you're shaking a Polaroid picture, but it's like the early stages of the Polaroid picture. So like I know that it's going to be a picture eventually, but I haven't reached that point yet. So,
- 9:18 RTH: And that, the distinction that I want is to be as clear about as we can (and this is only our second sampling day, so we've got some, some imperfections in our, in our communication so far). [Ryan: Um hm.] And that is when you say, "I *know* that it's coming," does that mean I *see* it coming (in my imagination)? Or does that mean I have some cognitive understanding that sooner or later this thing is going to come, but there's no real visualization?
- 9:45 Ryan: Hmm, that's a good way to put it. It's more the latter.
- 9:49 RTH: So I forget what I said. [they laugh]. So it was a more of a cognitive recognition kind of a thing?

9:52 Ryan: It's more of, it's, it's a process that I'm familiar with and I know it's, it's coming up, but it hasn't exactly initiated. So if I had it, it would just, it would be there. But it was more of like digging deep into my... (It's so hard to explain.) It's more of like digging down in reaching for something, rather than actually like having a picture load [RTH: Okay.] like I originally tried to describe it. But then when you, you've phrased it like that, that made a lot more sense to me.

10:24 RTH: So I, I *don't* actually *see* something. I recognize that I'm in the act of *trying* to see something, but so far I haven't, it hasn't happened yet.

10:34 Ryan: Yeah, I think I recognize the process. Like the gears were turning but, but the completion of the task was not there yet.

10:45 RTH: Okay. And then I think I'm good.

10:45 Russ comments: So was Ryan's experience at this beep really an unelaborated visualization or really an inchoate cognitive thinking? We ended the discussion on the *thinking* side of that question, but there are lots of reasons to be skeptical about that conclusion. This interview has spent the last three minutes (since about 7:37) making a distinction that is relatively unfamiliar to Ryan. If that distinction really is unfamiliar to him, *then there is no reason to believe that he would have been able to make that distinction when he tried to capture his experience at the moment of the beep.*

Therefore, there is reason to be skeptical of the conclusion that we have arrived at.

But those three minutes of interviewing have now clarified the distinction, so that *on subsequent sampling days, if Ryan has a similar experience*, he will be in a position to make the discrimination when it counts (that is, immediately after the beep). This is the heart of the iterative nature of DES. The interview *seems* to have been backward looking (looking *back* at Ryan's beeped experience) when it was essentially forward looking (trying to improving *tomorrow's* potential experience-discriminating skill). DES considers such iterative skill building to be an essential feature of any method that seeks to apprehend inner experience with fidelity.

SAMPLE 2.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

10:48 AK: Me too. Number two.

10:52 Ryan: Um, still on embolisms. I was typing in my notes on my computer, um, the words "and an embolus." Um, and I was saying the words in my head as I was typing at the same time with no image attached. Just typing the word, typing the sentence.

11:14 AK: Um hm. So I'm saying those words while I type them?

11:21 Ryan: Yeah. [Alek: (inaudible)] I'm saying the sentence as I'm, as I'm typing.

11:25 AK: And sorry, I missed it. Is this aloud in my head?

11:28 Ryan: It's in my head.

- 11:29 AK: Okay. And um, is this essentially the same kind of thing as reading “embolic ischemia” in the first beep? Except there I was reading and here I’m typing? As far as the phenomenon is concerned.
- 11:46 Ryan: It’s a little bit different because I’m creating this sentence, whereas the first one, I’m just reading something that’s already there. I’m, I’m putting the words in, in order in this case. But it sounds the same. That bad adjective again. But...
- 12:04 AK: Um hm. The voice is experienced the same...
- 12:08 Ryan: I’m driving the voice. Yeah.
- 12:10 AK: Okay. But here I’m creating the words and that is somehow part of the experience, that I’m...
- 12:15 Ryan: Yeah. I’m trying to like figure out what comes next, where in the other one it’s already there and I’m just following the track of the words.
- 12:27 AK: Um hm. And the typing.
- 12:29 RTH: [interrupts] Can I, can I ask a question about that before movin’ on? [Ryan: Yeah.] So I understand that in the, in the physical world, in the actual word, world, the words are there in the first place and being constructed in the second beep. But is that, is that in your experience? That I somehow directly apprehend myself as creating these words? I’m obviously *doing* that, but the question is whether I *experience myself* as doing that.
- 12:58 Ryan: Uh, can you rephrase that? I’m not sure I understand.
- 13:01 RTH: So I understand that I’m typing “and an embolus.” [Ryan: Um hm.] And I understand that these words are coming from me (I’m not just blindly rotely copying them from something). [Ryan: Yeah.] So I don’t think there’s any question about that. But the question is whether my *experience* is of *somehow* actually creating these *words*? Or does it seem like, well, I’m just *typing* these words.
- 13:25 Ryan: It was more, it was more like I was just typing these words. It wasn’t like... It didn’t take a lot of energy to figure out how to phrase the sentence. It was something that I was just, it was, I was answering question. So I was just typing the answer to the question as if you asked me a question right now and me answering it. It just, I didn’t have to search for anything, uh no visuals, I was just typing “and an embolism.” I don’t remember the rest of the sentence. I didn’t write that down.
- 13:54 RTH: And so the experience of speaking is I guess pretty much the same as the experience of speaking in the first beep. [Ryan: Yes.] Not more, not more labored or more...
- 14:08 Ryan: Exactly. It’s, it’s more labored in the sense that I’m going at the pace I am typing, so like I’m not thinking about the next word. While I’m typing as I’m typing the word embolus, I am, I’m saying the word embolus, as I’m typing.

- 14:27 RTH: And that, so in the real world, world, in the real world, that would have to be slower. I would be typing slower than I generally speak. So I would have to be saying [speaks slowly] “and...an...embolus” or something like.
- 14:41 Ryan: I type pretty fast.
- 14:43 RTH: But that does not mean that in the *experiential* world that the experience of speaking has to be slow just because the, just because the speaking is in fact in sync with the typing doesn’t mean that it has to be *experienced* as being slow.
- 14:59 Ryan: Yeah. I, I think I type faster than I talk. Mmm. So it, it was probably more in line of how I would actually speak than it was not. So it’s not like I was like saying “and [pause] an [pause] embolus.” I was saying the sentence fluently as I was typing each word.
- 15:22 RTH: Okay. So, so basically the reason, the reason I’m making this, this point here, I guess is at least in part as a forward-looking thing. I want us to, what I call *bracket*--what we call *bracket*--the presumption that the rules of the physical world apply to the rules of the experiential world. [Ryan: Um hm.] It is entirely possible to have the experience of speaking at this rate—and I know that I’m typing down what I’m typing. I can’t possibly keep up with this, with this rate—and yet I experience myself as speaking at the same speed as I’m typing. That’s possible.
- 15:57 Ryan: Yeah, it was, it was definitely at a, at just whatever I’m speaking right now, it was at, at this rate, [RTH: Okay.] it was fluent. I wasn’t like stopping between or slowing down to try to like catch up while I’m typing, so to how I’m speaking. It was, it was all fluid and simultaneous. I typed for a job for two years. I was, I worked with a doctor and every time he saw a patient, I had to type up his, his medical note. So I, I learned how to type really fast. So...
- 16:29 RTH: So I’m not doubting that for a moment. What I would like us to recognize is that even if you *weren’t* a fast typer, it is quite possible to understand yourself as speaking fluently, even though your typing is slow.
- 16:43 Ryan: Hm. [seemingly with understanding] Yeah. I don’t think that’s the case here, but I, I can see that.
- 16:50 RTH: But, and so I’m going to leave this, but I want to say one more thing. The bottom line is, we’re interested in your experience. We’re *not* interested in the connection between your experience and reality. And I understand that in this particular case, *regardless* of whether the typing is fast or slow, that your experience is of speaking fluently at your normal speaking rate.
- 16:50 Russ comments: When RTH says that he is not interested in the connection between experience and reality, he is not implying that that connection is unimportant. The fundamentally important point is that if one is sincerely interested in that connection, then one has to get the experience side of the connection right. Only *then* can one truly explore the connection between experience and anything else. Much of science

appears to assume a straightforward connection between experience and reality, or if does not make that assumption, appears to believe that it is possible to do a crummy job of exploring experience and still learn something important about the experience-reality connection. We doubt that that is true.

17:11 Ryan: Yeah. So my experience was I was typing, I was speaking at, at my speaking rate as that would be talking. That's how, that's how I experienced it. [RTH: Okay.]

17:26 AK: And then about the physical act of typing. Is that in your direct experience? Or is that just sort of going on automatically?

17:33 Ryan: Yeah, it's muscle memory.

17:35 AK: So as far as my experience is concerned at this moment, I'm just saying to myself "and an embolus" while I type it. [Ryan: Yeah.] Okay. And we, I've understood you to be saying this is *speaking* experience, as in I, I experienced myself *producing* the words, speaking the words? And I think that last time we kind of started to flesh out the distinction between innerly *speaking* words and innerly *hearing* words. [Ryan: Um hm.] Do you remember that? I think we said it was something like, um, speaking is like speaking into a tape recorder. Hearing is like hearing your voice played back.

18:14 Ryan: I was speaking this time.

18:15 AK: This is a speaking. Okay. Great. Then I'm good.

18:19 Ryan: Me hearing is typically when I'm like daydreaming and like I'm not trying to initiate any type speech, where here I'm typing and I'm trying to type what I'm saying. So like when I write, I like to write in my own voice. So like I try to speak like I'm speaking when I'm writing. So when people read it they like hear my voice, if that makes sense. So I actively try to speak in my own voice when I'm writing or typing.

18:48 RTH: So what I would say about that is that that was two aspects of, uh, a self-*theory*. This is what I like to do while I write, and this is what I like to do when I daydream (or something like that). And I'm not, I'm not *disagreeing* with that self-theory, but I want us [Ryan: Yeah.] to set it aside. [Ryan: Yeah.] But that's part of the bracketing thing. We will discover that that's either true or not, or maybe we won't discover it one way or the other. But, but, but let's set that theory aside.

18:48 Russ comments: Recall the comment at 4:07. RTH could have said this same thing then but didn't. Now he did.

19:16 Ryan: Remove my bias from my experience.

19:20 RTH: It's a challenge to do that because...

19:22 Ryan: It is It's all I know!

19:25 RTH: That's right. [Alek: That's right.] And, and I, I'm not sure that I understood what the, what the middle word was in this, in the, in what you said. Is it "and an" or "and in"?

19:35 Ryan: A-N. [RTH: A-N. Okay. Got it.] Are we on to three?

SAMPLE 2.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

19:43 RTH: I'm good. Number three.

19:49 Ryan: Um. Okay. Alright. So I was having trouble trying to get a prescription from my doctor today. So I have a doctor in South Carolina, but he can't prescribe medicine across state lines. So like I was in constant communication throughout the day, trying to, to get that issue resolved. So, um, when beep three went off, I was, uh, printing out my study guide and I, while I was printing out, I started to daydream a little bit, just, just waiting. Um, and I said verbally, um... No, I, I heard the *doctor say* in *my* voice, the doctor said, "I'll do it, but I'm going to discontinue care." And I could visualize the doctor saying it. I saw he was wearing a plaid shirt, and it's not even what he wore the last time I saw him. Um, and it was about 50-50, visual to verbal. So I was hearing what he was saying, almost like pressing Play on a tape recorder. Um, and I was visualizing, I was like looking at him from like a third person perspective visually.

21:07 RTH: So I see him and I hear him say?

21:11 Ryan: Yeah, in my own voice. Uh, he said, um, "I'll do it" (as in like, I'll prescribe it). "I'll do it, um, but I'm going to discontinue care" (as in stop seeing me as a patient).

21:24 RTH: Right. And, and he, he's saying it, but he's saying it in your voice.

21:28 Ryan: Yes. It's my voice. I don't hear it in a different cadence as I did from the last beep. It's the same, same cadence of myself from the last beep. Like I don't visualize his voice at all.

21:44 RTH: So I, I'm not, I'm not a hundred percent sure that I, that I'm understanding this yet. So I, first of all, I see him. Is this correct? I see the doctor, he's wearing a plaid, plaid shirt. And do I see him from the waist up? Or the whole body? Or...

21:57 Ryan: Um, waist up. But he's looking like this and I'm almost looking at him [turns to the side and points at the right side of his face]. I don't see me, who he's talking to. But I do, I see him from the side angle, [RTH: Okay.] like a side profile.

22:11 RTH: And, and is he, do you see him clearly?

22:14 Ryan: Um, more clearly than I did when I was trying to think of an embolus, but it wasn't like a photo, like a photograph or anything. Um, it's hard. It's very hard to describe this because it's not an actual image that I, it's not like I was like looking out a window. So like I, I was seeing the outside. Um, but it, it was very clear to the point where I saw the angle, I saw his face, I saw his shirt, but it wasn't like high definition.

- 22:48 RTH: Okay. So sometimes in that, in that it seems like it was *pretty* clear and other times, it seems like it's not, not clear. So is that, is that the way we should understand?
- 22:56 Ryan: In terms of how I usually visualize things, it was on the clearer end of that spectrum. So like there's definitely a spectrum of how I can visualize things, and when I visualize things, this was definitely on the more, uh, prominent, um, side.
- 23:15 RTH: Okay. And in color?
- 23:16 Ryan: Yes. So he was wearing like a, like a whitish bluish button up shirt. [RTH: Okay.] Almost similar pattern to what you're wearing. Except it was white and the lines were, were blue.
- 23:33 RTH: Okay. And is he in motion as he says, as these words are spoken?
- 23:37 Ryan: No, I don't see the mouth move. It's not that clear. It's just like an overall, just, I just know that it's, it's a person I know. [RTH: Sure.] Stuff like that.
- 23:52 RTH: And so then there are words that I *hear*, I'm understanding, I hear these words? Or I...?
- 23:57 Ryan: I hear it, but it's in um, like my thinking voice, if that makes sense. It's the voice. I don't really, I've heard some people say that like if they want it to think of like Morgan Freeman's voice, they could do it. It wasn't like that. It was, it was, it was mine that I, that I think in on a daily basis.
- 24:22 RTH: So is, is the basic experience is, I'm seeing and hearing the doctor say this, but I happened to, I happened to use *my* voice instead of the doctor's *actual* voice.
- 24:34 Ryan: Yeah. It's almost like I was playing out a scenario of like a conversation between myself and him, but...
- 24:42 RTH: But it's the, regardless of, regardless of the characteristics of the voice, it's the *doctor* speaking. [Ryan: Yes.] So I hear that, I see and hear the doctor speaking and he happens to be speaking in *my* conversational voice.
- 24:59 Ryan: Yeah. And I didn't initiate it. It wasn't like self-speech. It was more a, I was hearing the tape recorder rather than talking into the tape recorder.
- 25:10 RTH: Okay. But I'm gathering... So let, let me, let me state clearly what I understand to make sure that this is right. So this is a question: I, I do *not* hear *Ryan* speaking. I hear *the doctor* speaking who happens to be, for whatever reason, speaking with Ryan's vocal qualities.
- 25:34 Ryan: Yes. Correct. So like I knew it was him speaking. I could, it was a daydream. So like I wasn't controlling it. I was just like *there*, and I was, I saw it and I, and I, I spoke it, but I didn't, it was like pressing Play. Like it was, it was my voice. I didn't initiate it.

- 25:52 RTH: And, and in that I spoke it, I understand it's actually *he* spoke it. [Ryan: Yeah.] Even though it's in your voice. [Ryan: Yes.] Is that right? [Ryan: Yes. Correct.] Okay. Alright. And then the, uh, the study guide is printing out, but I'm gathering that's not in my direct experience. It's a fact of the universe, but...
- 26:12 Ryan: It's a fact of the universe.
- 26:13 RTH: So as far as my experience is concerned, there's really *one thing* going on here: I am seeing and hearing the doctor say, "I'll do it, but I'm going to discontinue your care." And I can see pretty clearly the characteristics from him, from the side, and I can *hear* him clearly enough [Ryan: Um hm.] and for whatever reason he's speaking in my voice.
- 26:36 Ryan: Yeah. Before, before he, he, he said that, I was speaking from *my* perspective, but in the same voice. So it was like, it was a back and forth daydreaming of a scenario if it would happen, I guess.
- 26:53 AK: And is this something, so I'm understanding this is not something your doctor has already told you. You're just imagining he *might* say something like this.
- 27:00 Ryan: It was a huge conflict of the day. And it was, it was on my mind for, for most of the day.
- 27:05 AK: Okay.
- 27:07 Ryan: He's horrible.
- 27:11 AK: Let's hope he doesn't decide to check out your YouTube channel.
- 27:15 Ryan: I'll shout him out. I don't care. [they laugh].
- 27:19 RTH: All right, I'm good.
- 27:20 AK: Yeah, me too. [Ryan: All right.] Cool. Number four.

SAMPLE 2.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 27:26 Ryan: Um, I was on social media looking at a picture, um, like scrolling through Instagram. Um, and I was looking at a picture of a girl. And I thought to myself about the beeper when I was doing it. I was conscious of the beeper. Um, and I said, imagining that I was talking to you guys. Just like the last scene. Like I was like daydreaming again. Um, and I said, "I was looking at a picture," answering your question of "what were you doing when the beeper went off." And I said, "I was looking at a picture" in this daydream. Um, I said the last one was a similar experience except I was more deeper into the daydream on the first, on the last one. This one, it was just like a quick little thought that popped. Um, there's no visual, really. It, uh, er, wait. Yeah, this one had no visuals. I just said it. Not really initiating the words, so it just kind of flowed out. Um, and then the beeper went off in that middle of that sentence. [Alek: Okay.] Those are my thoughts.

28:37 AK: So let me see if I got all of that. So you are scrolling through Instagram.

28:40 Ryan: In this exact chair right here.

28:42 AK: Okay. And you're, you are at the moment of the beep. Are you looking at the picture of the girl?

28:46 Ryan: I'm looking [Alek: Okay.] at a picture and um, I was like aware of the beeper. I'm like, this is going to be weird if the beeper goes off. And then I, that I stimulated the visual of me talking to you guys and then saying, um, "I was, I was looking at a picture."

29:06 AK: Okay. But I understand there wasn't actually anything visual. Like you didn't see us. [Ryan: No. But...] But you experienced yourself speaking to us. Is that right?

29:15 Ryan: Yeah. [Alek: And this is...] While looking at the picture. So [they speak at the same time] [Alek: Go ahead.] That's it.

29:23 AK: Okay. So it's, it's as if I'm speaking to I guess me and Dr. Hurlburt, but you don't see us.

29:31 Ryan: No, but I know it's directed towards you guys.

29:35 AK: And is it specific like you guys, like both of us? Or is it one of us? Or it's just this situation?

29:43 Ryan: Yeah, it's, it's this situation where it's what I know, like we did it last time, so I got, I knew what, how to experience it.

29:53 AK: Okay. So it's as if I'm in an interview answering our questions just like this. [Ryan: Yes.] And I say quote, I was looking at a picture.

30:00 Ryan: Yeah. And it happened after I was, became aware that it would be weird if the beeper went off while I was like scrolling through Instagram and then it w w went off and like I created the scenario after that.

30:16 AK: Okay. And so in our, in our timeline, did we use this last time? [Ryan: Yeah.] Here's time marching on; here's the beep, right? And then the beep is going on, then you turn it off and time continues [Ryan: In the middle.] So, so I'm wanna understand where the awareness of the beeper comes in. So is it like I'm scrolling through Instagram and I'm looking at the picture, I'm thinking, Oh God, it'd be weird if they asked about this one, and then I started imagining the answering our questions.

30:43 Ryan: Yeah. And then it beeps.

30:44 AK: Okay. And so does that mean, sort of like I showed here, that the thought about the beeper and like what if I get beeped here--that has kind of come and gone. [Ryan: Um hm.] Okay. So that's come and gone. And now I'm just in the daydream of saying it to us.

30:59 Ryan: Yeah. It's not like I was just staring at like one picture for like a long time. I was scrolling through and like stopping and looking at each picture and like within the three seconds that it takes me to look at a picture, all that, all of that happened.

31:17 AK: Okay. And, but what the beep catches is me saying "I was looking at a picture."

31:23 Ryan: Um hm. Because I created the scenario of what would happen if it beeped right now. Like I'm not studying. Um, it's nothing's really going on.

31:33 AK: Yeah. I don't see it. But do you, are we somehow present to you?

31:37 Ryan: Yes. Like I feel the presence, but I, there's no visual attached to it. It's just me just talking to myself. Some would say.

31:51 AK: And so does that just sort of mean while I'm saying it to them, so therefore they're present to me in some way? Or I'm saying it to them and I somehow experience their presence, even though I don't see them.

32:04 Ryan: No, I felt, I felt the presence, but there's no visual attached to it. [Ale: Okay.] It wasn't like a strong feeling of you guys looking at me. It's just like I, I, I was conscious of the surroundings without actually seeing the surroundings. Just like if you're laying in bed, you're like aware of, of your bedroom, but like you're not like see, you don't have to like visualize it to see it. You just, you just know that like where your dresser is located. Like I knew that you would be in front of me, but like I didn't, I didn't see it. It's also hard to explain as well.

32:40 AK: So I'm, I'm somehow like I'm present to me or I'm aware of the, this interview situation. Is that right? [Ryan: Yeah.] Which includes us, but it's more than just us as people. It's us as interviewers in this situation.

32:56 Ryan: Correct. This exact situation except there's no visuals. Like how I feel now, like getting looked at by both of you guys and answering these questions. I kind of felt that, but too, to a lesser degree, I just feel that it was there.

33:12 AK: I *sensed* that, or something.

33:14 Ryan: Yeah.

33:19 AK: Okay. And so, I mean we've pretty, we've firmly established, there's not a, it's not like I'm seeing something. But is this like the first beep, where like it seems like a visual thing is coming? Or it's not even like that. It's, I, I'm aware of this interview situation, but it's not going to be visual. Nothing's coming.

33:39 Ryan: I think that if the beeper went off three seconds later, it would have been a completely different thought. It was, it was just like a snap second where I literally, all I did was say that sentence, and that's all I needed to say to know that I was in that situation.

- 33:58 AK: Okay. So this, this would have come and gone. It's not like I'm working up a visual representation.
- 34:04 Ryan: Almost like I was mentally preparing myself if the beep went off. And it did happen to go off at that exact time. [Alek: Okay.] Because like it was, it's still new to me. So like I still think about the beeper every once in a while. It was much less this time than it was last time, though.
- 34:22 AK: Um hm, yeah, I think that's common. I think it'll probably even become further and further from your mind. But we'll see. And so the words are, these are inner words. And are they spoken? Or heard? Or does it make sense? [Ryan: Heard.] These are heard?
- 34:37 Ryan: Yes. So I didn't initiate the speech, I just, it just came, came in my, my, my brain.
- 34:47 AK: So it's as if I hear myself say to Russ and Alek, "I was looking at a picture." [Ryan: Yes.] Not, I do not experience myself as speaking these words. [Ryan: No.] Okay.
- 35:03 RTH: So let me make sure that I'm understanding that. The, and when you were reading and writing, typing earlier you experienced yourself as speaking the words.
- 35:14 Ryan: I'm, I could explain this deeper, but I think it would just get more confusing if I tried to explain it more. I will try to explain it more if you guys feel like maybe you'll, you'll understand. But like you asked if I heard it or said it, but I, I *heard* it. But it's almost like I was hearing it being said, but feeling myself say it, if that makes sense. So it's like, it's layered to the point where I was daydreaming about saying something. So like I felt the fact that I was saying something, but I didn't initiate any of these words. It just came out.
- 35:56 RTH: So the question here is not about the initiation, it's about whether this is a phenomenon of *hearing* [points with fingers into each ear] or a phenomenon of speaking [points with fingers coming out of his mouth].
- 36:05 Ryan: Correct. So I was...
- 36:09 RTH: And, and we've established... So what I was gonna say is we've established that your voice can be apprehended in both ways. [Ryan: Correct.] In the first beeps we, you were *speaking* [Ryan: Um hm.] while you were reading or writing. [Ryan: Yes. Like when I was...] And the third, and then the third beep you were *hearing* your *voice* [Ryan: Um hm.] as if it were spoken by somebody else. So your, your voice can be heard. That I understood that to be a, I'm hearing my voice, the doctor saying "I'm going to discontinue his care," whatever that was, but that was as if it was coming in my ears rather than coming out of my mouth.
- 36:45 Ryan: Yeah. This was more of like a third person experience where I, I was putting myself in a situation (and the situation was this right here). And I was, I was saying it, but I didn't, in my own like physical, like that exact moment, I wasn't initiating the speech, but I

knew at that moment that like I was putting myself in a situation where I would be saying it. It's, it's very confusing and layered.

36:45 Russ comments: It seems that RTH and Ryan's communications do not directly connect. RTH is aimed at a perceptual distinction (hearing vs. speaking) while Ryan is replying about a volitional distinction (initiated or not). In most everyday conversation (and much scientific investigation), such miscommunications go unnoticed, both sides automatically believing that they are talking about the same thing. However, DES is interested in the fidelity of apprehending a private experience, so we will have to iron out any such talking-pasts. We've been working at it for the past several minutes, without success.

Perhaps this is just a language thing: RTH's question wasn't clear or Ryan's understanding wasn't precise. But the source of the miscommunication may be deeper: perhaps Ryan's inner experience is such that RTH's probes are inadequate, misguided, or otherwise do not rest easily on Ryan's experience.

It is *not* the case that the distinction here (between speaking and hearing) is particularly important. What is important is a high-fidelity glimpse of Ryan's experience, and the probing about the speaking/hearing distinction has revealed that we still have some refining to do, somewhere in this region. That refinement *must* take place iteratively, gradually improving across sampling sessions. If Ryan and RTH were unable to connect cleanly in two minutes of conversation here, there is no reason to believe that another two minutes will provide a clearer view of this sampled experience. But experience on the *next* sampling day is a different story: Ryan and RTH can get some practice discussing the details of Ryan's experience, and in so doing we may be more efficient should a similar issue arise in future sampling. So this discussion (and its continuation) should be understood as being aimed in large part at *next week's* sampling, not only at today's sample.

37:21 RTH: So, so it sounds to me like maybe there maybe there is no good answer to this question, that speaking and hearing in the real world is very different, two very different things. But in the experiential world, sometimes there's not a distinction to be made.

37:34 Ryan: I think, um, the way I, um, am like differentiating those two is if I am initiating self-speech and that's me speaking, or if I'm not and it's just the speech is just coming out organically without me trying to, to think about what to say. It just comes out.

37:55 RTH: So that's a good distinction. But I would not call that the distinction between speaking and hearing. I would call that the distinction between something like feeling the initiation and not feeling the initiation, and keep that separate from speaking and hearing.

38:07 Ryan: Alright. Put that in brackets because that's, I think that's the best way to describe it then, about how this is happening.

38:14 AK: It's possible that you could have words sort of rolling out, as you're kind of describing. I'm not, there's no effort. I'm not, I have no presentiment of what I'm going to say. And even though they're rolling out without effort, I still experience myself as the speaker.

That's possible.[Ryan: Yeah.] So I don't think we should default to just because it's not effortful or initiated, that it must be heard.

- 38:36 Ryan: Okay. Okay. So going forward, whenever I said in the past that I was hearing, it was more so I wasn't putting in the effort to say it. It was rolling out like a daydream. I didn't put any effort into it. My mind was wandering and it came out. Where sometimes I initiate the speech talking to my own self. Instead of talking out loud, I talk in my head.
- 39:02 RTH: And how about in a doctor who's discontinuing your care? Is that, uh, hear, does that sound like hearing?
- 39:09 Ryan: More like a rollout, any other situation, but attached to the image of, of the doctor. So it sounds like there's a perspective, and I hear the voice coming this way towards me. I still see the person and it's almost like I'm talking to that person, but I just knew that it was in their perspective. [RTH: Okay.] We've got our hands full.
- 39:37 AK: We do! But it's only day two. [Ryan: Yeah.]
- 39:40 RTH: And, and, and, and this example is why we have to, we have to *struggle* at these things because I don't think we have cleared up, cleared this up. I think what we've done is we've maybe [Ryan: Muddied the water.] Well, I don't know about muddying the waters, but we've *complicated* the waters. I would say that. And uh, and sooner or later we, we're either going to figure this out or we're not. And that's, that's fine with us. We're not, we, we're not *especially* concerned with whether things are spoken or heard. One of the, one of the things that makes the conversation worth having is that it focuses you on your experience. But what exactly do we mean by experience? And we've, we've made some fairly remarkable claims in the half an hour that we've been talking together here: we've been saying, "Whoa, that's a guy speaking in my voice!" And no, uh, "I can speak, I can speak, uh, in sync with my very...slow... typing, and yet it seems like I'm speaking at a natural, natural rate!" Those are pretty amazing claims that we're just sort of tossing out there at this moment.
- 40:48 Ryan: I think I don't have an issue like remembering or recognizing my experience. I have difficulty translating it to like layman's terms, to like where people, like they're not experiencing what I'm experiencing. So I'm trying to describe it as real events as much as possible, to like put into perspective. But it's still [inaudible]
- 41:12 RTH: Right. And that is what makes this, what makes this task that we're engaged in an, an interesting thing. Because you're trying to put into words something that you, (a) have never had to put into words; and (b) translated into words that, that, that we will understand and that we have to understand in *your way*, which means there's no guarantee that the words that you would use would be, have the same definition [Ryan: Exactly.] or close as the words that we would use. So we *have to* work that out. We have to test your, and you have to test our, every, every word, basically, until we finally figure out what we're, what we're talking to each other. And that can take half a dozen or more sessions.

- 41:53 Ryan: Alright. I think, I think we're doing well. You, when you guys describe it and in ways that you've probably talked to other, uh, subjects about, um, it makes uh more sense to me. Because like you've, you've described it before to other people, so like, you know, how to explain the certain experiences, where I've never had to explain this before. So
- 42:15 RTH: I think that's exactly right. It's, it's *our* job to be helpful in helping you, helping you speak in a way that we can understand, basically. [Ryan: Yeah.] [Alek: Cool.]
- 42:28 Ryan: Okay. Onto the next,
- 42:30 RTH: Well, one last question or this one. I was presuming, but from what we said, and this is a question as well, so the, the girl: your eyeballs were still aimed at the girl. Were are you experiencing her? Or were, had you left her in favor of this, ih...?
- 42:44 Ryan: Yeah, I left the image. It's not like I was, I was like analyzing the picture by any means. I was just, I was mindlessly scrolling through social media and then it happened while I was doing that.
- 42:58 RTH: And so you're, you are scrolling, and you are your, your eyeballs are aimed...
- 43:03 Ryan: I'm coming in and out.
- 43:05 RTH: And at the moment of this beep, are you out? [Ryan: Yes.] Or whatever. Um, I'm into my own thinking about that. [Ryan: Yeah.] You're not really processing what's out there.
- 43:14 Ryan: Yeah. I'm more inward than outward at that time.
- 43:17 RTH: And the question there: does "more inward" mean "I am entirely inward" at this particular moment.
- 43:26 Ryan: Um, no, because I am aware that I am looking at the picture because I wouldn't have had that thought or experience if, if it wasn't because of that.
- 43:38 RTH: So that would be an analytical, theoretical view from my point of view. So the question, so the question is at the moment, do you *experience* the girl, the girl's picture?
- 43:38 Russ comments: RTH takes Ryan's [43:30] "because I wouldn't have had that thought or experience if, if it wasn't because of that" as expressing a self-theory. As we have seen, Ryan has made at least three self-theoretical statements so far today. The first time, RTH overlooked it (see the comment at 4:07); the second time, RTH gave a mini-lecture about self-theories (see the comment at 18:48). Now RTH points out the self-theory without elaborating. DES is a performance art, full of such judgments; these examples illustrate that there is no formulaic way to respond to a self-theoretical statement. The overall object is to establish that DES wishes to bracket such self-

theoretical statements. All discussion of bracketing is aimed at improving next week's sampling more than at improving the fidelity of today's description.

43:50 Ryan: I don't remember.

43:52 RTH: Okay, then I'm good. [Alek: Yep. Me too.] Number five.

43:58 Ryan: Mmm,

44:00 RTH: I here, here again, I would say, I would say just parenthetically, that what we were just talking here, is there is a distinction between what's happening in the physical world and what's happening in the experiential world. [Ryan: Um hm.] Clearly it's the case that you had seen the girl, and the girl had caused you to have this kind of thing, or whatever. But whether that was before the beep or whether that was in your experience *at* the beep, that's the issue for us.

44:21 Ryan: Yeah, I'll keep that in mind going forward.

SAMPLE 2.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

44:25 RTH: Number five.

44:29 Ryan: So I had a study guide. And on the study guide there were questions given to me. Um, and I was studying for the test. So I was reading the question and trying to answer the question without like looking at the answer that I wrote down. Um, and to do this I like read it, and then I closed my eyes to try to... I'm like, uh, I have a good spatial memory. So like I could tell where on the, uh, in my notes I wrote down the question. So I closed my eyes and then it beeped while I was seeing the paragraph on the paper that, that had the answer in it. Um, I didn't come to the answer yet, so like I didn't know the answer to the question. I was just honing in on my notes and where in my notes the answer was. Um, and sometimes it takes a process, it takes time to actually like, um, trigger the memory of what the answer is.

45:32 RTH: Okay. So the, the "sometimes" portion is not what we're interested in. We're interested in this particular, this particular beep. And what I've understood so far, [clears throat] excuse me, is that at the moment of this beep, I am innerly seeing, I am seeing the page on which this answer is going to appear. But I so far haven't seen the answer.

45:32 Russ comments: Ryan's "sometimes" statement reflects a self-theory, so this is another instance of RTH's consistent pressure against admitting self-theories into evidence. That does not at all imply that Ryan's self-theories are false—we just want to bracket them. And it is not at all a criticism of Ryan: nearly every DES participant needs substantial help in discriminating self-theory from experiential apprehension. Remember that if Ryan's self-theories are accurate, we will likely see examples of how they play out throughout sampling. If we've done our job of bracketing, we will be

able to trust those examples (and will not need to worry that they are merely the result of our colluding in his theory).

- 45:53 Ryan: Yes, I haven't seen the answer. I could see like, um, almost like the, the, the block. [holds up study guide and points to paragraph] I can't see the individual words just like the block of the paragraph that the answer is in. I remember typing it. So I remember seeing the paragraph on the paper. I knew it was in the bottom half of the paper. I could spatially tell. I'm not, it's not a clear picture of the paper. It's more of blobs of spatial awareness of like *where it is* on a paper. But like I don't actually see the paper, if that makes sense. It's more of I know where it's located, um, without actually seeing a physical piece of paper or the physical words. It's just where it would be spatially on a piece of paper.
- 46:46 RTH: Okay. So there there's a fair amount of ambiguity in that expression, [Ryan nods affirmatively] in that expression, and it's our job to try to figure that out. [Ryan: I'm ready!] So is there, is this a *cognitive* thing, I as in, I am aware that this is three quarters of the way down the page. That would be sort of an analytical deal. *Or* is this a *visual* thing--I am seeing a page and I'm, in my imagination, I'm seeing what's roughly three quarters of the way down, down the page, but I haven't elaborated the text and so I'm seeing some physical features of the page even though I don't see enough to be able to see the answer yet.
- 47:25 Ryan: Yes. So I w, I would never get to the point, like it takes time to like for it to develop again. Um, I would never see the full paper, ever. It would never get to that point. Um, but it does take time to locate it on. Can you, can you explain what you just explained for the first time?
- 47:50 RTH: I will, and this is a tricky thing. So the question is: Is, is my experience at the moment of the beep one of *seeing* a page that is not elaborated, not very elaborated, but my experience is of *seeing* it. I see a blob here and a blob there. And so that's a *visual* experience. [Ryan: Um hm.] *Or* is my experience one of *cognition* or knowing or something. I *know* that the answer is most of the way down this page, even though I don't *see anything* about the page there. There's a lot of things that I *know*, you know, I know that the Potomac river goes through Washington (or around Washington or whatever). I'm not *seeing* that right now, but I *know* that.
- 48:36 Ryan: Can it be a combination of the both? Of, of...
- 48:39 RTH: It could be, or it could be something entirely different. So,
- 48:42 Ryan: So like I knew that it was a third down the page. So then I visualized the page.
- 48:53 RTH: So the question is, is your experience of knowing that it's a third of the way down? Or of seeing the unelaborated page? Or both? Or neither?

- 49:03 Ryan: It's both. So I knew, I knew it's a third of the way down, and then the picture, I had to form the picture to find the answer.
- 49:12 RTH: Okay. In our timeline, [hold up paper as timeline and advances pen slowly toward it] does that mean that I know it's a third of the way down and now I formed this unelaborated picture and beep? [Ryan: Perfect. Yeah....] So that, what that would mean is at the moment of the beep, which is this moment right here, I am *seeing* this unelaborated page, and the *cognition was beforehand*. That's so the alternative to that is something like, well I know it and I'm thinking and I see it and I both know and see it at the same time, and that gets caught in flight by the beep.
- 49:49 Ryan: Um, so the, the me knowing that it's a third of the way down is right here. I start to form the image, beep. So at, at the moment of the beep, it's *just* the image. [RTH: Okay.] It's where I could visualize that, that block. So I have to locate it and *then* I'll visualize like the shape of where the answer is in. So it's not necessary, I don't necessarily *see* the answer, like word by word. I see it as a shape on the paper and then I will remember typing it. But at that point it was just the blocks. It was the block.
- 50:32 RTH: Okay. So by *that* analysis, I would say that at, at the moment of this beep, this was a *visual* experience. [Ryan: Yes.] The cognitive experience has sort of come and gone, and now I have the visual experience, but the visual experience isn't yet elaborated enough. I could say, well, you know, beep me a couple of seconds later and I could read the answer back off to you. But that, but that would be *after* the beep. [Ryan nods affirmatively] At this *particular* moment, what I've got is: I'm seeing a page on which I presume the answer is going to be there, but my experience is, I'm, I'm seeing the *outline-y* [Ryan nods affirmatively] schematic of the, of the page where the answer's gonna come.

50:32 Russ comments: Let's be clear about what's happening here. RTH is trying to help Ryan make two important distinctions, one experiential and one temporal. The experiential distinction is between a visual event (I *saw* something) and a cognitive event (I *thought/knew* something). The temporal distinction is between *before* the beep and *at the moment of* (or caught in flight by) the beep. DES maintains that attaining high fidelity descriptions requires careful attention to both aspects.

It may *seem* that the discussion of these aspects is backwardly aimed—trying to discover what was going on in Ryan's experience at the precise moment of beep 2.5, and that is indeed partially true. But the fact is that if Ryan needs help now in the interview in distinguishing between seeing and knowing, he probably hadn't been capable of making that distinction in the seconds surrounding the beep. So the honest observer would have to conclude that despite RTH's summary ([50:52] "At this particular moment, what I've got is..."), we don't really know what was experienced at beep 2.5. The main impetus of the foregoing discussion is *forward* looking: *Next week*, Ryan is likely to be better able to distinguish between experienced cognition and experienced perception.

Once again, we emphasize: This is *not* a criticism of Ryan. Almost no DES participants are initially good at making such distinctions.

- 51:17 Ryan: Yes. So I didn't know the answer yet, but I knew that that's where I needed to look to find the answer.
- 51:17 Russ comments: Even though we have spent substantial effort distinguishing between knowing and seeing, and Ryan had a moment ago agreed that the experience was of seeing, he reverts at 51:24 to a statement about knowing ("but I knew that that's where I needed to look"). Again, this is decidedly *not* a criticism of Ryan. The adept making of distinctions such as between knowing and seeing is not merely a matter of defining the distinction, it is a skill that requires practice, and all practice involves mistakes and the correction of mistakes. RTH will have to take the role of coach. That's just the way it is if you want high-fidelity descriptions.
- 51:26 RTH: And not only did you *know* that, but you *saw* that, is that correct?
- 51:30 Ryan: Yes. I saw, I saw the, the, the thickness. Like, I could tell that the answer was in this thick part, like this part's thinner. So if I wanted to know the answer, I would know that it's in this, this part right here. And then I'll try to visualize that. And then I would remember.
- 51:30 Russ comments: Once again, Ryan has started with *seeing* and ended with *knowing*. RTH will have to help him...
- 51:48 RTH: And does that mean I *see* a thin part and I *see* a thick part?
- 51:53 Ryan: Um, at this point it's just the thick part at the bottom third of the page that I...
- 51:53 Russ comments: Note that by saying [51:53] "it's just the thick part" he again declines to commit to whether it was seeing or knowing, another hint that we (including Ryan) haven't yet grasped this experience.
- 52:00 RTH: Okay. At just at this moment, at this moment, I see (incompletely or inchoately, or, uh, schematically or whatever) the bottom third of a big block of text [Ryan nods enthusiastically: Um hm.] and, and, and that's my experience at the moment of the beep. And I can say what I, you know, I think that's where the answer is. And I'm, I'm visualizing us because that's where the answer's going to be. And sooner or later I'm going to, I'm going to read the answer off and then I'm going to know what the answer is. But my experience at the moment of the beep is an in-, unelaborated image.
- 52:38 Ryan: Yes. At the moment of the beep it was, it was a block. It was a paragraph shape and it wasn't vivid or anything. It's just a block of, of words without like a true image, like a, like a high def image. It was, it was a blob.
- 52:59 RTH: But a *seen* blob, [Ryan nods affirmatively] not a *known*, not *just* a known blob.
- 53:05 Ryan: Yeah, I was, I was seeing it.
- 53:08 RTH: And I would, I would... That's great. And I would point out how long it has taken us to get to what your experience is here. [Ryan nods.] And that's, this was by no means a

criticism of Ryan. It's, it's, it is what we were talking about before. We have to, we have to sort through what your vocabulary means to you, and what our vocabulary means to us, and how we can bring those into some kind of commensurate commensuration (if that's a word) with each other so that we can connect with what we're talking about. And that takes time and work. And most people don't, don't do it. And as a result of that, people end up, you know, you stuck in your world and we stuck in our world and not, not really seeing what the other half is like. [Ryan: Um hm.]

53:58 AK: Yep. Can I, I don't want to beat this horse to death [Ryan: No, that's fine.] But um, I worried at the end of this that we had sort of driven out the, the, where the paragraph is aspect a little too much. Like it seemed to me that you're really trying to give me like notes about where on the page it is. That's what my experience is about. Not so much... So I understand that that knowing is (the cognition part), is not there at the moment of the beep. But what I want to understand is whether what I *see* is *where* the answer will be, which happens to be a block on the bottom half of the page? Or I see a block on the bottom half of the page and as *context*, that's where the answer will be. Do, do you see what I mean there? Is the where-ness fundamental to the experience?

54:47 Ryan: Yes, absolutely. I need the awareness of where it is on a paper to know the answer. It's less so about the blob. It's just me knowing where it is on a paper, um, triggers the memory of what it looks like, the, where the answer is on the paper. So it's not, so I'm getting the answer from the shape of the blob. I'm more so getting the answer from where it is on the paper. [Alek: Um hm.] Did that answer your question or not even close?

55:20 AK: I th I think so, but you cut out for a second so I missed some. But, um, I think so. I'm just trying to get like, uh, it's just a context experience thing, you know, and, and maybe it won't be resolved for me here. I don't know. But, um,

55:39 RTH: So maybe, well, let me interrupt this thing so we can get into the last beep before I do that, because we're running out of time. And w and what I would say about this particular beep is that since we were not particularly clear about [holds up paper timeline] what was this far before the beep and this far before the beep, I'm not, I think maybe we can't answer that, that question on this, go around. The question that Alek is trying to get to is a good question, but I don't think we're going to be able to get it on this beep.

56:02 Ryan: Yeah, it's just more of an, a process rather than it is like what I'm experiencing in that snap moment. Like I'm, I'm, it's a, it's a huge, it's not a huge process, but it's, it's a multistep process to find the answer. So like when you're asking like what's happening at that moment that it's like, it's a time thing. So like I don't know how to take a picture, that exact moment that's happening and explain that to you. It's, it's moreso I am at a point in the process and the point of the process is I see a block, um, where I know it is on the paper, which is in the bottom third.

56:38 AK: Okay. Yeah. Well let's, let's see, see number six then.

SAMPLE 2.6 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

56:47 Ryan: Alright. Um, okay. Uh, the doctor that I was talking about, uh, beep three (yeah, beep three) responded.

56:54 AK: [inaudible]. Ryan: What?] I said “your favorite doctor.”

57:00 Ryan: Ah, that guy. Um, you’ll, you’ll hear in a second. Um, so I was on the phone with them all day and they said just message them on the portal, which is like the place where I could like communicate to them, um, to the doctor. So I sent him a long (I’m just building context right now) I sent him like a long message that was like, well thought out, like I put in work to it. And then he just responded with like, like a one sentence, um, that said, “Best of luck, uh, I’m not gonna send a prescription over state lines.” That’s all he said. And what happened in that moment was I was typing back, um, I wasn’t, I was halfway through a sentence trying to think of how to phrase the sentence without sounding like (I wrote in my notes) “a condescending asshole.” Um, because like I was feeling like anger at that moment, and I was trying to like control the anger while I was trying to figure out what to say back to him. Um, and the context of what I was saying was about neglect and like neglecting patients. And I was trying to figure out how to phrase it in a way that was not rude, because that’s, that’s all I kept thinking about.

58:18 AK: Okay. So I’m trying to think of what to say back and it’s going to be something about neglecting patients. [Ryan: Yes.] But I’m also trying to say it in a way that’s not like an asshole.

58:18 Russ comments: AK 58:18 is a very skillful turn. The object of DES is to convey experience in high-fidelity, and as we have seen, that is a matter of adjusting our linguistic behavior to each other. When Ryan mentioned sounding like a “condescending asshole” (at 57:49), his expression included what I took as a social reluctance. He *could have* said “without sounding like a condescending asshole,” but *instead* he said “without sounding like (I wrote in my notes) ‘a condescending asshole’.” The insertion of “I wrote in my notes” (to my ear) is a way of distancing himself from the impact of the description—it says in effect, *you can’t blame me for using rough language, I’m just quoting here!*

Alek responded (at 58:26), “But I’m also trying to say it in a way that’s not like an asshole.” She *could have* responded in a more polite manner, something like “But I’m also trying to say it in a way that’s not rude.” But had she done so, she would have entered into a tacit agreement with Ryan, something like, *let’s collusively agree to use polite language rather than to describe experience in high fidelity!*

But instead of opting for politeness, Alek said (at 58:27) “not like an asshole” in an entirely natural, unflinching way. She did *not* put “asshole” in actual or metaphorical quotation marks of any kind, and thus conveyed something like, *if “not like an asshole” is our best shot at a high-fidelity description, then let’s use “not like an asshole.”* That may seem a small thing, but it isn’t. It conveys, where the rubber meets the road, that the important thing is fearlessly doing what it takes to get high fidelity descriptions.

58:29 Ryan: Yeah, correct.

- 58:32 AK: Okay. And then am I also, you mentioned something about feeling angry. Do you, so I understand that that message from your doctor would certainly make someone angry. And now I want to know, do I *experience* that anger? Like, do I *feel* angry in my direct experience at this moment?
- 58:50 Ryan: Yeah. I have to like control, because the anger is dictating the phrasing of, of how I'm trying to, to write back to him and I'm trying to like push that aside to think of something that's more um, nice to say or professional.
- 58:50 Russ comments: Alek asked about the *experience* of anger, and Ryan replied with a *self-theory* about anger ("*because anger is...*"). As we have seen in multiple comments above, self-theories die hard.
- 59:10 AK: Okay. And is that, so, does it seem like I am in a sort of emotional state and my, trying to think of what to say is like driven by some anger going on, but I don't really have a feeling of anger? Or I am angry and I *feel angry*. There's something present to me--a *feeling* of anger--and I'm doing this, figuring out what to say.
- 59:35 Ryan: Yeah. I'm, I'm feeling the anger and um, the way I'm, the way I write is, um, just like I explained in one of the other beeps about how just words flow out and then I type those words, I call it stream of consciousness. When I, whenever I write for the most part, it's stream of consciousness where it just kind of flows out and I just type what I'm thinking. [Alek: Okay.] It was like that, except I did not like the stream of consciousness. It was, it was rude. I was being an asshole. And it was verbal. It was, um, it was words, was fluent sentences. Um, and then I would think of one, and I can't say that; think of one, can't say that. So when the beep went off, I was in the middle of thinking of a sentence, and I sounded like a condescending asshole at that time.
- 1:00:24 AK: Okay. Okay. Well, let's talk about the thinking of a sentence.
- 1:00:29 RTH: So before I, before we, before we do that, can I, I'm, I'm not yet sure that I understand what's central in your experience. And so far I've thought, I've heard, well, I'm *feeling* angry, and *that* might be central in my experience. And I've heard, I'm evaluating myself as a condescending asshole, and *that* might be center, central in my experience. Or I am thinking of the words that I might say; *that* could be central in my experience, [Ryan: That's (inaudible).] Or all or all of the above or something else, or none of the above, or whatever.
- 1:01:00 Ryan: So it's all happening simultaneously, but, um, it's, uh, I'm more focused on the, the words that are coming, that I'm trying to think of, to write. So it's moreso these words are flowing out. That's the central part of this experience, is the words are flowing out organically. Um, and I, I, I can't wri, I'm choosing not to write that. And then it beeps and it's, it's just, it's, it's a, it was, it was happening for a while. So like I was getting writer's block, I guess you want to call it. Um, and I was just sitting there for a while and it beeped when I was just thinking of ways to phrase a sentence. Where I was not actively trying to put the words together--they were just flowing out. And I think that

was attached to the anger where it was flowing out against my will of ways that I should not be talking to a doctor.

1:01:55 AK: Okay. So mostly it's the, what I'm going to say, verbal portion.

1:02:00 Ryan: Yes. It's, it's, it's verbal.

1:02:02 AK: And I've heard you say that sometimes you have called that words flow rolling flowing out. And sometimes you call it thinking of what to say.

1:02:11 Ryan: Luckily when I write, which is I enjoy this fact about myself, is I don't have to like really put in much effort. They just, they just roll out, like I said, stream of consciousness. I don't know.

1:02:25 AK: Okay. So are you in fact typing a response to him?

1:02:28 Ryan: I was *not* typing. I was, I was hearing my voice, um, what to type. So it was my voice coming out organically without having to even like put words together. It was just me talking sentences. Um, and I [inaudible], yeah.

1:02:52 AK: And are those sentences in a voice? Or [Ryan: Um hm.] do I just somehow have the *idea* of what I might say? And it's pretty clear, but it's not that it's manifested in a voice.

1:03:04 Ryan: They're in my voice in a, in a cohesive sentence. Um, and I'm, I'm *hearing* the voice. And I know what I want to talk about, but I'm not controlling exactly the phrasing that that is, is rolling out.

1:03:21 AK: Okay. And what exactly are the words that the beep catches?

1:03:27 Ryan: Um, I didn't write that down, but it has something to do with, at that moment, um, "I appreciate the generous amount of time that you spent writing back." It was, it was along the lines of that, which was sarcastic, and I was like, I can't write that.

1:03:45 AK: [laughs] Okay. So something to the effect of like, "Oh thanks for the time you've spent on your response."

1:03:50 Ryan: Yes. Because clearly he did not spend much time on it.

1:03:54 AK: And those words seem to just be rolling out. Like I'm not really even engaged in this word process. I'm just hearing my voice say what I might say in this response.

1:04:06 Ryan: Yeah. That's why I like writing so much because it just, it just comes out and I just write what I am thinking. And it's, I know people don't like writing 'cause they have to like form every word that, th, that they're writing about, from my experience talking (like you said, I shouldn't trust them). But, um, for me it's just, it comes out natural. And then I, I edit after.

1:04:28 AK: And you have seemed pretty confident that this is a like a hearing experience?

1:04:33 Ryan: It's same, same exact experience as when I was one of the earlier ones, like when I was typing, um, the answer to the question. It was, I was hearing it, um, and I was typing along with it, except instead of typing along with what I was hearing, it was, I was, I was letting it drift [Alek: Um hm.] because I knew that I couldn't, I shouldn't be typing that.

1:04:57 AK: Okay. And how about the asshole part? Are you at the moment of the beep in some way noticing or monitoring or whatever your tone and trying to make sure you don't sound like an asshole.

1:05:11 Ryan: I would say that the asshole feeling would happen. So I would think of a sentence, and then it would be blank and then I would feel like an asshole. I wouldn't say, Hey, I'm an asshole. So I would, I would hear the, hear the words, feel like an asshole; hear another sentence, feel like an asshole. And then when it beeped, I was in the middle of one of those. So it was like a cycle.

1:05:37 AK: So the noticing my tone and that I might sound like an asshole is not present here at the moment of the beep, but it has been a part of this process? [Ryan: Yes.] Okay. And maybe we don't have a ton of time, but um, (Well we don't have any time. We have negative seven minutes [laughs].) But uh, do you feel angry? Does it make sense to say that there's something else in my experience at this moment, and it's a feeling of anger? Or really I'm just in this, I'm making angry, sarcastic comments at this guy.

1:06:07 Ryan: No, I'm feeling the anger. Um, and I think that's what's, once (you keep telling me not to theorize), but that's what's causing the, the s, the sarcastic statements is like just me, like feeling like I need to be an asshole, but I obviously knew I can't. So like I was feeling it.

1:06:27 AK: How does that, how does that feeling present itself to you?

1:06:31 Ryan: Like, like in my chest, like I want to punch a wall, but I can't. Like pent up energy out. It's not a thought, I don't think.

1:06:40 AK: Um hm. Do you mean that like, um, literally I guess as far as your experience is concerned? Like there's something going on in my chest that I'm calling anger. [Ryan: Um, it's not...]

1:06:53 RTH: And she's not asking a question about the physical chest. She's asking about your experienced chest. Just...

1:06:59 AK: Right. [Ryan: Yeah.] Like I have some physical sensation of anger or something?

1:07:04 Ryan: Yeah. Absolutely. Almost like, yeah... Like you know when people say that my blood is boiling? It's kind of like that, where like it's not actually like boiling or on fire. You just like, it's like pent up. [Alek: Um hm.] Oh [inaudible]. I don't, I don't, I never explained aggression before in words. [Alek: Um hm.]

- 1:07:24 RTH: So those are good examples, and we oughtta just focus on that a little bit and then we're probably out of time. [Ryan: Yeah.] But so the deal is some people say, "my blood is boiling," and *they* mean I feel a bubbly sensation in my *veins*.
- 1:07:40 Ryan: Do they though?
- 1:07:41 RTH: Some people do! Yes! [Ryan: Hmm.] And, and other people use that as a *metaphor* because the *other* people, well that's what these words have come to mean. And the same thing is true about, "I feel it in my chest." Some people actually feel an experience in their chest, and other people are, their anger is entirely mental, but they say, "well I feel it in my heart" just like, 'cause everybody else who's experiencing something like that feels it in their heart.
- 1:08:07 Ryan: Yeah, I feel, I for sure feel it in my chest. But I don't think that there's actually like a stimulus causing it. So is that considered a thought? If I'm feeling it in my chest, even though it's not actually, there's no physiological thing going on in my chest?
- 1:08:22 RTH: So w w w we *wouldn't* call that a thought. We would call that the experience of some physio physical thing in your chest, even though it probably doesn't correspond to [Alek: Um hm.] some physical organ. [Ryan: Yeah.] So we're, we're interested in your *experience*. And we don't care whether it matches up with, with some physical organ or not.
- 1:08:42 Ryan: Yeah. That feeling would be relieved if like I screamed or punched something or did something to like release the energy. [Alek: Um hm.] Like energy is the best way I can describe it. A ball of the energy in my chest.
- 1:08:56 AK: And you experience that energy as anger, is that right? [Ryan: Yeah.] Okay.
- 1:09:05 RTH: So I would say one of the things we learned today is how precise we want to be about, about the time. [holds up the paper timeline] We want to know what's actually going on right here. And so in the *present* beep, for example, you said, wow, I'm thinking about something. And then I say, no, I can't say that because I 'm like an asshole, or I'm thinking about something else. Well, we want to know exactly what that thing is that you happen to have been thinking about here, which means we're interested in what words you happen to use. If you're using words, we want to know what those words were that were, that are caught in flight by the moment of the beep. [Ryan: Yeah.] And that and, and the, the corralling of your experience down to the moment of the beep is, is what we always do. That's, that's what it's... This is not a failure of Ryan to stuck right at the moment of the beep. This is what... Nobody sticks close enough to the beep for our taste, un, until after we've been, been down this road several times.
- 1:09:59 Ryan: I just feel like it's important to like set the scene to help explain like that exact snap moment in time.
- 1:10:09 RTH: Absolutely. [Alek: It is. It is.] And we're not trying to deprive you of the ability to set the scene. What we want you to do is to set the scene and then say, "but at this particular

moment of the beep...,” You know, you could say in general, well I was saying this and not that, this and not that, that’s an asshole and this and not that. But at the moment of the beep, I always saying, “go fuck yourself,” or whatever it is that you... Well, I can’t write that!

1:10:09 Russ comments: See the comment at 58:18. For whatever reason, Ryan has not quoted himself even when he has described himself as hearing his voice and then rejecting it as being too much an asshole (throughout 1:01:00—1:04:30). There are lots of reasons why DES participants don’t quote themselves: they simply forgot; the speech was happening too fast to quote; it wasn’t really speech; the speech was embarrassing; and so on. We have no way of knowing which of those (or others) apply here. By advancing “go fuck yourself” as a possibility, RTH is conveying that quoting rude expressions is fine with him.

1:10:32 Ryan: Yeah. So at the, at the moment I think I, I told you what I thought of it. It was like, “Thank you for...”

1:10:38 AK: “...your generous time” or something like that.

1:10:41 Ryan: Yeah. “Your generous amount of time you spent on this message” or something like that. Something along those lines. I’ll, I’ll write down the exact thing.

1:10:49 RTH: Right. And, and it’s, it’s because the, the “something along those lines” is a signal for us: well, we don’t really know exactly what’s going on here. That’s, that’s...

1:10:58 Ryan: I think my issue is that like when the beep goes off, it pulls me out of that snap moment. And the only thing that I could, like if that I know for sure to describe is the process overall rather than that exact moment.

1:11:12 RTH: Maybe. And, and that might turn out to be the case. And that’s fine, that’s fine as well. We’re trying to get as precise as we can get. We don’t want to get any more precise than that. [Alek: Mm hm.]

1:11:23 Ryan: All right. I think this was, this was fun.

1:11:26 AK: Yeah! Agreed.

1:11:28 RTH: So can we do it again and, and shall I leave it up to you and Alek to work that out [Ryan: Yep.] when, when it’s convenient?

1:11:37 Ryan: I think I’m gonna, each time do it in a different like mind-say or different settings. So like the last one I was watching TV, this one I was studying. So I think the next one’s going to be something entirely different. I haven’t thought of that yet though.

1:11:49 RTH: Yeah, I think that’s good. [Alek: Yeah.] But I would notice that even though you, this was a study session, you, you weren’t studying all the time and you were, it’s your doctor one time, and looking at Instagram, and whatever.

1:12:01 Ryan: Some people procrastinate. [all laugh] Alright. Thank you guys.

1:12:07 AK: We'll keep in touch.

1:12:09 RTH: Thank you very much. And our plan is that we'll post, we'll post on Monday. Is that the...?

1:12:14 Ryan: Yeah, just loosely. I could probably be done before Monday, so like, I don't think there needs to be a strict schedule. So like whenever you're done you can just post it. And whenever I'm done I'll post it.

1:12:27 RTH: That's fine. [Ryan: Alright.] I liked *your* post by the way. [Alek: Yeah, cool.] [Ryan: Thank you.] I thought that was good. Your, your video, your, your vlog, I thought was good.

1:12:35 Ryan: I appreciate that. Thank you.

1:12:37 AK: Alright.