

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY
Do I Really Have Internal Monologue?
Ryan Langdon Interview 6:
DES Sampling Day 6

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the June 30 interview with Ryan Langdon that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/hIqTjhwvBhg>. 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

0:00 RTH: Okay, well, I'm ready.

SAMPLE 6.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

0:05 Ryan: Alright. Um, so for the first one, I was watching a podcast on YouTube. I just need to set the scene a little bit, just so you can understand the context a little bit. Um, I was watching a podcast on YouTube and one of them broke their ribs and the guest, the guest asked, well, uh, "Do you know which ribs you broke? Or do you even know if they are broke?" Um, and the guy responded, "No, I didn't get an X-ray." And it beeped when I was watching him demonstrate where he hurt his ribs. And I thought, not in words, I just kinda knew it, that like, some people may not understand, like they not, may not be medically literate. And like, you shouldn't take their word for what they say, because he said in the beginning of the interview that he had broken ribs. Um, and then later on it said that he never even got an X-ray. So he doesn't know that. And I don't know, there's no like words that went along with it. It was similar to the one where I was like looking in the background of my professor's thing and thought about how younger people look, or rich people look younger. [Ryan is referring to sample 3.1.] Um, it was similar to that where like, there's no words attached to it, but... And it all happened like really quick.

1:24 RTH: So at the moment of this beep I am I'm understanding that you're watching TV, but that the center piece of your experience, the center of your experience, is, is a thought, which is *you* shouldn't believe what people say, some people aren't literate, they don't *know*.

1:38 Ryan: Medically literate.

1:39 RTH: Medically illiterate.

- 1:43 Ryan: Like you shouldn't take someone at their word if you're taking a history on a patient. It was more like, I don't know. I don't know if it was... There was no words to it. I just kind of *knew* at that moment that's what I was thinking about.
- 1:59 RTH: But I'm gathering that even though there are no words, this is fairly specific. Something about medical literate, literacy, [Ryan: Yeah.] and something about you, shouldn't take their word for it. And something like they don't know. [Ryan: Yeah.] All that stuff is wrapped up in this unworded thought.
- 2:16 Ryan: Yeah. I think I was digesting the, like the video of them talking. 'Cause it was still part of my experience of me watching and listening to them. But all of that information I knew like immediately.
- 2:31 RTH: And by "knew immediately," do you mean in front of the footlights of my consciousness?
- 2:34 Ryan: Yeah. That's what I was thinking...
- 2:39 RTH: And would you say you're more into the thought about that or more into watching the TV or 50-50 or...?
- 2:46 Ryan: Ah, 50-50? It pulled me away from it a little bit, but it was still present in my experience, the video.
- 2:54 RTH: Okay. Then I think I'm good.
- 3:02 AK: Yeah, me too. I cut out for a second at the end. Did you guys add anything to this besides it's a thought with no words, pretty specific?
- 3:11 Ryan: Uh, yeah, that was, that was about it.
- 3:13 RTH: And watching and watching TV, 50-50, watching the video presentation. Anything else in your experience? [Ryan: Uh, no.] Then I'm ready to go on.

SAMPLE 6.2 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 3:27 AK: Alright. Beep number two.
- 3:30 Ryan: Um, this beeped when I was typing the first beep. I was typing the words "it happened quickly," um, like I said previously. Um, and I was saying the words in my head as I type. And then I did kind of like, uh, a little extra stuff that I wrote for it. And I said it was tough to say if typing the words, um, if I was typing the words to my thoughts or I was hearing the, if I was reading what I was typing. So like, I don't know if I was typing what I was hearing or hearing what I was typing. Um, if that makes sense. But I, I heard, I said, um, "it happened quickly" in my head in internal monologue at the rate of me typing.

- 4:14 AK: Okay. So those words are present: “it happened quickly.” And this is like an internal monologue, inner speech kind of thing?
- 4:29 Ryan: Um hm. I was just typing along with what I was saying.
- 4:32 AK: And you said at the rate of typing? [Ryan: Yeah.] So does that, does that mean like in sync or just *seems* like they’re the same?
- 4:42 Ryan: It’s in sync. So it’s like at, like I was saying the word as the words were popping up on the screen. And like I said,
- 4:50 AK: So as it appears, I’m saying “it - happened - quickly.” [Ryan: Yeah.] Would it be a little, a little more like drug out than normal speaking? Is that, am I understanding that?
- 5:01 Ryan: I, it was, it was it felt fluent to me. It didn’t seem, um, wacky or anything.
- 5:10 AK: Okay. So it seems like they’re just flowing together. It’s it doesn’t feel like a “it - happened - quickly” or something like that? [Ryan: Yeah.] Okay.
- 5:20 Ryan: And like I said, in it, as I get better at like, analyzing what’s going on, um, I noted that, like, I don’t know if, if I’m reading the words and that’s what I’m hearing? Or I’m typing what I’m hearing. I don’t know what comes first, the chicken or the egg, if that makes sense.
- 5:39 AK: Yeah. So it’s like, so the question remains of whether this is like a *reading*, like I’m *reading* what I type, [Ryan: Mm hm.] or if I am, I guess, *narrating* or *saying* my thoughts and typing.
- 5:54 Ryan: Yeah. I I’m personally think (I’m gonna put a bracket around it) that I am writing what I am saying. But it happened at the same time. So I don’t think there’s actually a way to tell the difference. [Alek: Okay.] I guess if I could close my eyes and type never mind, figured it out.
- 6:11 RTH: So, so that’s what the bracketing means, is that we can’t figure it out. We’re gonna just, we’re gonna set it aside. It’s an interesting question, but we’re not getting any evidence about it on this beep, I understand.
- 6:21 Ryan: Absolutely. No.
- 6:22 RTH: And, and we have sometimes used the word “speaking” and sometimes use the word “hearing.” Do you, do you...?
- 6:30 Ryan: I tend to use the word “forcing speech” and “not forcing the speech” and this one is me forcing the speech.
- 6:38 RTH: So this one, this one is definitely a speaking thing. [Ryan: Yeah.] I am creating these words and experiences of *speaking* them, not *hearing* them coming back from some, ah, loudspeaker that’s playing Ryan’s voice.

6:48 Ryan: Yeah, speaking them in my head [RTH: Okay.] as if I was saying them out loud. [RTH: Okay.] It happened quickly.

6:56 AK: And we've called that on other occasions, we've called that like "self-directed speech" or something like that. Is that right?

6:56 Russ comments: Alek is mistaken here—Ryan has never said "self-directed." They will get it worked out in a few turns. There are two "good news"es here: First, interviewers don't have to be perfect—small mistakes can be corrected. Second, this is evidence that Ryan is paying close attention to his experience, what he has said about it, and what might be said about it. "Self-directed" just doesn't work for his experience, and Ryan notices that and makes the effort to straighten it out.

7:03 Ryan: I don't know if you referred that to me. I don't know if you've talked to them.

7:06 AK: I know you, Ryan, I think like, is that in the ballpark of what you call self-directed?

7:14 Ryan: [Squints quizzically] I don't think that would be self-directed. Like I'm not like talking to myself, I don't think. I'm typing--that's just like happening, that's just like how my writing process works. I'm not saying, I wouldn't say I'm talking to myself.

7:28 AK: Maybe the word was "initiated," but either way...,

7:30 Ryan: Initiate is what.

7:32 AK: Initiated. Alright. And is there anything else in your experience?

7:38 Ryan: Uh, no. Just the, the words popping up on the screen as I was typing.

7:44 AK: Yeah. I totally glossed over that. So is the typing in experience at all? Or is typing just happening automatically? And all that's in my experience is the inner speaking of it.

7:55 Ryan: Yeah. I'm not thinking about like my fingers typing it all. Just, just thinking the words and then, and then typing them without like, consciously having to, to think about it more like muscle memory.

8:07 AK: And I assume that your eyes are aimed at the screen. Do you see the screen and see the words?

8:13 Ryan: Yeah. And I'm seeing the words pop up on the screen as I type. Okay.

8:17 AK: And just like watching that unfold? Not nothing in particular.

8:21 Ryan: Yeah. Nothing different than normally how I write. I just like, I self-reflect on the beep afterwards and was thinking about whether I was typing the words, too. If I was hearing the words as I typed or typed the words and was reading it and then hearing, hearing.

- 8:42 AK: That's a really interesting question. [Ryan: Yeah.] So I'm, I'm saying these words while I type them in my head. That's in my experience. The typing, like the physical act, is not really, that's happening automatically. [Ryan: Yeah.] But I do see the words as they appear on my screen. [Ryan: Mm hm.] Okay.
- 8:56 Ryan: Just like watching for typos as like I would normally do, but that like, wasn't conscious, like if there's a red line that popped up, that would've caught my attention, but that wasn't in my consciousness at that time.
- 9:08 AK: Okay. Then I'm good.
- 9:11 RTH: I'm good too. But I would say about the bracketing of presuppositions: it could be that I'm hearing what I'm typing, and it could be that I'm typing what I'm hearing. And it also could be that there's some other explanation for it. Like these things are parallel and one of them doesn't have anything to do with the other, but the Ryan bag of bones is both typing and both speaking and, and those two things are happening because they're connected with the same bones and sinews and nerves or whatever, but they're not impacting the other. [Ryan: Mm hm.] And, and, and this is a little mini-bracketing lecture. That's the way we keep things out of, out of influencing is just to accept that we really don't know. [Ryan: Yeah.] We're totally, totally ignorant about these things.
- 9:54 Ryan: I was just fascinated with just like the experience itself. So I was just reflecting on it.
- 9:59 RTH: So I'm going, and I'm just trying to undermine that fascination just a little bit by saying, well, it could be some of that, something else even beyond that.
- 10:04 Ryan: And I love that. [they laugh] That makes us all even better.

SAMPLE 6.3 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 10:10 RTH: Yeah. Number three. Okay.
- 10:13 Ryan: Um, I was typing on my computer. I was texting my friend, but from a computer. I was talking to a friend about a boxer's fracture, which is a break in the fifth metacarpal right here. Um, and when you break that hand, but when you break that bone, your fingers curl in a little bit. And I was typing to him, um, where was it [looks at computer screen] , uh, "my fingers did that" when it beeped and said it quickly as I typed it quickly. So like the speed of, of the, the, the words that I was saying in my head was fast, just like my typing.
- 10:51 RTH: And the words were, "my fingers did that"?
- 10:54 Ryan: Yeah. "My fingers did that." Because that was talking about how I had a boxer's fracture at one point. And we were reading about how, like your fingers, like one of the signs is like your fingers curl in. Um, and I, and that was just saying "my fingers did that."

11:08 RTH: Okay. And so is your experience of the, I guess I, I didn't figure this out. So you're typing "my fingers did that." [Ryan: Mm hm.] And you're saying these words along with them?

11:22 Ryan: Yeah. Just like the last one where I was typing. And I was saying the words along with me typing, except I type this really fast. And so I said it, I said it along with the words really fast.

11:34 RTH: And so I, I'm accepting that you said it really fast, but is it in your experience, is it really fast? [Ryan: Yeah.] Because I understood in the last one, that the words might've been a little bit slow, but you didn't *experience* them, experience them as slow.

11:48 Ryan: Um, this one, I experienced them keeping up with the speed of my typing. So,

11:54 RTH: So I do experience the words as being fast [Ryan: Yeah.] in this beep, even though I did not experience the words being slow in the previous beep.

12:03 Ryan: I wouldn't say that I didn't experience them being slow in the last beep. Did I say that?

12:08 RTH: I think so. That's what I understood anyway.

12:12 AK: Yeah. I think he said like, it seemed like they were fluent. Like it wasn't a choppy or slow thing, even if it might have been in reality. Does that make sense?

12:19 Ryan: Sorry. Okay. Let me change the verbiage. It was fluent as if like I was talking to you at this speed because I was typing at that speed. Um, so like, if I was talking to you right now, that was also a equivalent or if not really close to the speed I was typing. So the speed of what I say is keeping up with what I'm typing. If that makes sense. Don't know if that makes sense.

12:48 RTH: So in this beep.... So, so in the previous, in the previous beep the "it happened quickly" beep, that typing and speaking was that your sort of normal speed? [Ryan: Yes.] Is that right?

13:04 Ryan: Yeah. So think about it as my typing speed rather than my talking speed. So I was talking to the speed I was typing, which happened to be like a normal speed of me talking like this. Um, it was like equivalent, my typing speed was equivalent to me talking like this.

13:24 RTH: So my, my talking is in sync with my typing [Ryan: Yes.] in beep two, but my typing happens to be at the same speed as I would normally talk. [Ryan: Yes. Correct.] Okay. And yet I still experience it as being sort of in sync with the typing. [Ryan: Yeah.] Okay.

13:43 Ryan: Almost if I'm typing what I was thinking.

13:48 RTH: And here I experienced it as being... Here I experienced it as being in sync with my typing, but by typing is faster than I generally speak. And so I experienced myself and

speaking somewhat faster. [Ryan: Yes. Correct.] And it's not just that I'm speaking faster, it's that I am somehow mildly noting that I am speaking faster? That the whole thing is happening fast.

14:13 Ryan: I didn't like directly think about it in the moment that I was speaking fast, but when the beep came and I went to go record what happened. I just noted that the speech was faster, this beep, because I was typing faster. So...

14:28 RTH: That that's, that's the distinction that I want to be as clear as we can get about. So while you are speaking it, are you somehow noting that it's faster? [Ryan: No.] Or on retrospect, I noticed that it was faster.

14:41 Ryan: Yeah. On retrospect I noticed it was faster.

14:45 RTH: And so does that mean that at the moment of the beep I it seems like I'm just speaking in sync with the, with the typing? And then later on I recognized that the in-sync-ness involves being faster?

14:58 Ryan: Yes. I think, I think we're on the same page about this.

15:07 RTH: Alright. And then, is there anything else in your experience about this at this point? [Ryan: No.] Including your hand, you're writing about your own hand. [Ryan: Yeah.] But that's not in your experience with this moment?"

15:18 Ryan: Not at that moment, but I did think about the moment, like I flash back to the time where I broke my hand to like, remember the moment. But when I was typing, I wasn't thinking about that.

15:29 RTH: So some number of seconds or whatever *before* the beep you had remembered how you broke your hand and remembered that your hand had curled.

15:37 Ryan: [inaudible] that it looked like, yeah.

15:38 RTH: And that had inspired you or whatever, to type "my hand did that."

15:41 Ryan: Yeah. 'Cause that was...

15:43 RTH: But now that's gone. All I'm doing is typing "my hand did that." [Ryan: Yeah.] "My fingers did that," I guess. [Ryan: Yeah.] Okay. I think I'm good.

SAMPLE 6.4 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

15:55 AK: Yeah, me too. Number four.

16:04 Ryan: Um, I was responding to a message and I had the full message typed out. Um, and I reread it and I didn't like one of the words. So I went back and at this point of the beep, the cursor is like right next to the word "ploy." And I was like looking at the word "ploy" and staring at it. And then when it beeped, in inner speech, I said "scheme." As

if I was going to change the word “ploy” to “scheme.” And the whole other sentence was not in my, in my, the footlights of my consciousness at that point, just the word “scheme.” I said the word “scheme” when I was looking at the word “ploy,” like a synonym kind of.

- 16:47 AK: And so am I understanding right that both the seen word “ploy” is in my experience, and the innerly spoken word “scheme.” [Ryan: Yeah.] Those are both in my experience? [Ryan: Yeah. Correct.] And are you more interested in one of those at the moment, like is more of your experiential energy or whatever aimed at the, at “ploy” or at “scheme”?
- 17:10 Ryan: Um, not notably, no. Not, no. So it’s like 50-50, I guess. [Alek: Okay.] It definitely wasn’t like significantly different.
- 17:22 AK: Okay. And so about the, well, let’s start with “ploy.” So you’ve already written “ploy,” it’s on the screen, and you don’t like it. You want to change it. [Ryan: Mm hm.] And how exactly is it in your experience? Like, is it just I’m looking at it? Or am I into the cursor or am I like into the not liking it? What exactly is in your experience?
- 17:45 Ryan: Um, so like the reason behind me changing the word, because that wasn’t occurring at the time of the beep. That was before I just read it and I just didn’t like how the word “ploy” just, it didn’t like read well. Um...
- 18:00 AK: And is that not liking it? Is that still present to you? Or is that a thing that has come and gone?
- 18:06 Ryan: I’ve made the decision that I’m changing the word. And I was thinking of different words to use and then “scheme” popped in my head in it. And it beeped.
- 18:13 AK: So is there, Yeah, go ahead.
- 18:17 RTH: So can I, can I have a bracketing of presuppositions conversation here for a bit? [Ryan: Always.] So my eyeballs are aimed at the word “ploy.” [Ryan: Yep.] And I am involved in changing the word “ploy.” [Ryan: Yep.] But I want, so I would like us to be clear about whether that word, whether the seen word, is actually in my experience. So the question is, my eyeballs--there’s *no* question, my eyeballs are aimed at this word. And there’s no question I’m *changing* this word. But that doesn’t mean that I’m actually seeing it any more than when I’m driving, sometimes, I can, um, uh, obviously driving in and out of traffic and doing whatever it is that I’m doing. But if I’m having an interesting conversation, I’m totally experientially into the conversation.
- 19:05 Ryan: Um, hmm. I don’t know. I guess, uh, it’s it would be like driving and me daydreaming in the moment. And I w I was definitely looking at the word, like you said, but I guess maybe it wasn’t like something I was reflecting on at that time. The word “ploy” specifically, um, I don’t think [inaudible]...

- 19:31 RTH: In your experience does not necessarily require *reflection*. Some people say it does. I don't think it's, I don't think that's necessarily true. But the, but the question is whether it registers before the footlights of your consciousness, and...
- 19:48 Ryan: In what way could it possibly other, register, other than me looking at it? Like, I wasn't thinking about the word "ploy" specifically, but I know for a fact I was, I was staring at it with my eyeballs.
- 20:04 RTH: I don't know how to answer the question "in what way could it?" The question is just whether it *does*. So my eyeballs going to be looking at something and I can, and skillfully, like when I'm driving, and yet I'm not in my conscious before the footlights of my consciousness, registering that. And then at other times I am, you know,
- 20:27 Ryan: I'm starting to think it was not in the footlights. Now, the more that you talk about it. I was definitely saying the word scheme. I know that for a fact, but now I'm trying to...
- 20:40 RTH: And, and that, that's the, that's the heart of it right there. That's the heart of it. So your exper, your experience, there's *no question* about what is experience when it comes to "scheme." *I'm saying that!* [Ryan: Yeah] No, no question about that. But where there *is* question about is whether there is experience, directly kind of experience, when it comes to seeing the word "ploy."
- 21:07 Ryan: Um, like I was aware of like the, the space that it occupied in the message, like I w I was aware of, of the fact that that word right there was going to be replaced while I was saying the word scheme. So like, not necessarily the definition of the word ploy or, but like I was, I know for, like, [looks perplexed] I don't know.
- 21:36 RTH: So the question, the question. So, so there's *no question* about what you're doing here. You're zooming in on this word "ploy," and you're going to get rid of that word "ploy" and replace it with "scheme" or some other word. [Ryan: Yeah.] And that's a skilled operation. Your, your, you know how to do that. You're in the process of doing that. And it involves your eyes, and it involves your hands, and it involves your whole body actually, as you adjust your mouse or whatever. But the question is whether that is directly experienced, or whether that is a skilled operation, that takes place sort of outside your awareness.
- 22:14 Ryan: It's, it's, uh, it's most likely, I don't want to like, have you bias my decision, but I'm starting to think it was a skilled thing. And it wasn't like part of my consciousness.
- 22:26 RTH: And I, and I, and I'm, I don't want to talk you *out* of it, either. I'd say, [inaudible]
- 22:31 Ryan: I know. I don't think ours are doing either, but I think I'm starting to lean towards what you're talking about rather than what I was saying.
- 22:39 RTH: And, and this is, this is the kind of thing where I don't think we can possibly answer the question about this particular beep. That you're, you weren't ready to make that distinction when the beep happened, which was a couple of hours ago or whatever. [Ryan: Exactly.] So, so this conversation that we're having right now, it might seem like

I'm trying to figure out what was going on in that other beep, but it's not really. It's about, well, let's see whether we can sharpen this distinction for Ryan so that going forwards, he's more adept at noticing whether, whether the eyes are actually working.

22:39 Russ comments: This is the heart of the iterative procedure. We ask questions about a distinction about Ryan's experience at today's beep even though we recognize that it is probably not possible for him to answer those questions because he did not really grasp those distinctions at the moment of this beep. We want Ryan to practice thinking about the distinctions because that practice may make *tomorrow's* sampling be of higher fidelity.

Notice that the distinction we are inquiring about is not whether (1a) *on some occasions* it is (1b) *possible* for (1c) *a person* to have his eyes open but no visual experience. Instead, we are asking whether (2a) *at the moment of beep 6.4* it was (2b) *a fact* that (2c) *Ryan* had his eyes open but no visual experience. The first question is about an abstract theoreticality; the second question is about a concrete experiential actuality. DES believes that for science to proceed, we have to get straight about concrete experiential actualities *before* we allow abstract theoreticalities to have any influence. (That is the heart of the bracketing of presuppositions.)

23:15 RTH: [continues] 'Cause I had this question about the first beep today, too. You were watching the podcast or whatever. And, and I didn't say it at that time because, you know, when you were, I forget what the details of that were, but you had, you had this thought about, about whether the guy knew what he was talking about or whatever that, whatever that thought was about.

23:40 Ryan: And you wanted to know if I was still like listening to what they were saying or like...

23:46 RTH: And we left that as being, well, probably, 50-50 or something like that. But I was skeptical about that for the same reasons that we're talking about right, right here. It would be natural to assume that my eyes were open and the podcast was doing it and I was keeping track of it. It would be natural to assume that I was seeing it and hearing it in my experience, but I don't think that's necessarily true.

24:10 Ryan: So basically you're just giving me a skill to take forward as I go.

24:16 RTH: That's right. What I'm *really* trying to do is awaken your interest in, well, what, am I really paying attention to what my eyes are aimed at, that just because my eyes are aimed at that, that does, I mean, I'm really paying attention to it? [Ryan: Yeah.] There's only one time that you have a prayer of being able to answer that question. It's possible that that question is not answerable. I'm, that'd be fine with me. But the only time that you've got a *chance* of answering that question [snaps fingers] is right then, right at the moment of the beep. And so this conversation is, well, let, let's see whether we can get Ryan interested in, in that kind of deal. And it sounds like he is interested in this, these kinds of things. So let's, let's sharpen his skills a little bit [Ryan: Alright.] and maybe we'll learn something and maybe we won't. Maybe he'll learn something and maybe he won't. And so, and so I've, I *for sure*, don't want to convince you that when your eyes are open, you're *not* looking. That's *not* my aim. My aim is to try to bracket *all* that stuff. Well, maybe when my eyes are open, I am a, I *am* watching

maybe when my eyes are open, I'm *not* watching. Let's set that aside and see whether we can *see* at the moment of the beep what's going on. Because that's really, what's interesting.

25:31 Ryan: I mean, yeah, it could be, there could be so many different things that I'm not aware of, that I could be missing and not giving you guys information on. So [RTH: absolutely.] So the more I know, the better. [RTH: Absolutely.] It all makes sense.

25:44 AK: [inaudible] many times.

25:46 RTH: Number five.

25:48 AK: Well, [inaudible] real quick on number four. "Schema." Is that just an innerly spoken, your voice thing?

25:54 Ryan: Yeah. No like nothing else.

25:57 AK: Got it.

25:58 RTH: I guess now that [inaudible] ask back on that. So are you, are you analyzing whether "scheme" is a better word or not? Or are you just saying it, and had been,

26:07 Ryan: Well, I knew I wanted to change the word "ploy," so I, my brain went to thesaurus mode and the first word to pop up was "scheme." And then it beeped.

26:19 RTH: And so, so far all you'll all you have heard of, you have said "scheme." And somewhere down the line, but not yet, you're going to decide that was the right word. But so far you're just saying it?

26:30 Ryan: Yes. Correct. [RTH: Okay.] I haven't thought of it. Like it wasn't in my consciousness that I was going to use the word "scheme" at that moment. It was just an idea that popped up.

26:38 RTH: I've produced the word "scheme."

26:40 Ryan: Produced the word "scheme." I don't know where it came from, but....

SAMPLE 6.5 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

26:46 Ryan: [continues] Uh, Are we all set on that one? Alright. [RTH: Yep.] [Alek: Mm hm.] Um, a notification popped up on my phone that I had, someone followed me on Instagram. Um, and it beeped when I was reading the name of the person and the name was Daisy. And then the last name, which I'm not going to say, but even though I, I couldn't pronounce it. So I, I stopped. I didn't even say the word, the, her last name, I was looking at it when it beeped. Um, so I said the word "Daisy," which is the first name. And then the last name, which I'm not going to say, um, I didn't say in inner speech, I was just looking at it cause I couldn't pronounce it. It was obscure.

- 27:39 RTH: [pause. RTH doesn't realize that he is the lead interviewer for this beep.] Oh! Is this me? [Alek: (laughs) Yeah!] Sorry about that. So the, the, uh, am I looking at it with the intention to pronounce it? Or am I just looking at it?
- 27:51 Ryan: Uh, I didn't not put any intention into, into trying to say it or anything. It was just something that I've, I didn't recognize. It was com... It was a lot of words. A lot of letters (sorry).
- 28:03 RTH: So I'm, I'm looking at it and seeing it. This, so this is definitely in my experience. [Ryan: Yes. Correct.] And I would notice in, in light of the conversation that we just had before, you're asked, you answered *that* question with confidence, whereas in the *previous* one, you weren't really sure whether you were looking at it or not. That's what, *before the footlights of my consciousness* means. That's... Either it's before the footlights or my consciousness or it's not. And I can't tell you what that is because that's your consciousness basically.
- 28:36 Russ comments: Notice that our sample 6.4 conversation about the possibility of looking without seeing seems to have contributed to Ryan's confident distinction here at sample 6.5. Ryan's language refers back to that discussion when he says "I was definitely looking" and "...it registered." He has clearly profited from the earlier discussion: He acknowledges the possibility that his eyes could be aimed at the Instagram name without seeing it, but confidently asserts that he was, indeed, seeing it. This is another example of the DES iterative procedure (albeit here the iteration is from beep to beep *within* a single sampling day as opposed to beeps *across* multiple sampling days).
- 28:36 Ryan: Yeah. This one I was definitely looking at because it was like it reg, after the beep it registered, like, I couldn't read. Like, it was a last name that I'm not familiar with. Like, I mean, I could go back and sound it out, but I didn't like waste my time trying to sound it out. 'Cause like, I didn't know who it was so I could tell it didn't matter.
- 28:57 RTH: So is it the case that you have innerly said "Daisy" and that has passed?
- 29:02 Ryan: Yeah. I said "Daisy." It passed. And then I got to the last name and I just, it, I didn't say, say like, if I saw last name, like Alek---, I don't even know how to say your last name. So I would just stop. I don't know how to pronounce. What's your maiden name? How do you pronounce that? [Alek: Haugen.] I see. I wouldn't waste my energy. I would just like look at it.
- 29:28 RTH: So I'm looking at it. I'm acknowledging it as a name. [Ryan: Yeah.] I'm recognizing it as an unpronounceable, but I'm not thinking about any of this stuff. I'm not thinking this is a name, this is unpronounceable or whatever, but I'm seeing it and I'm seeing it as for what it is, which is as complicated as a complicated [Ryan: Mm hm.] name. And that's it. [Ryan: Yes.] I'm not trying to say it. I'm not analyzing it. I'm not saying this is Polish or Chinese or whatever.

30:04 Ryan: Nothing. I just, I knew it was just a name that I didn't know. So like, it didn't really matter at the time. I was like busy. So it had like, it popped up, I read it and then it beeped. Um,

30:18 RTH: And so is there anything else in your experience other than the seeing of this name?

30:25 Ryan: Uh, no. Going back to what we were just talking about, I was gonna say that, like, I remember the color of like the notification. It was like purple-y looking. Um, but I don't think it was in my, I wasn't thinking about that at all. It was more of a retrospect thing. Just like remembering the moment. Right now I'm remembering that it was purple.

30:48 RTH: So as a fact of the universe, this was a purple notification. But it wasn't like I was drawn to the purple or,

30:53 Ryan: But I was drawn to the last name that I knew that I couldn't say. So I didn't, I didn't say it. Where like, I, it's almost like if I was reading a full sentence and then just like stopped in the middle of the sentence. Like I said, "Daisy," and then just stopped and then it beeped.

31:14 AK: And so does it seem like at the moment of the beep, like you're reading? But just, it's so complicated that it's like I'm reading unsuccessfully? Or does it seem like I *was* reading and *now* I'm just looking at this name I can't say. And maybe I don't, or something else. I dunno.

31:33 Ryan: So, um, you're going to tell me to bracket this, but I thought about this a little bit. Like if I go to like read a sentence or something, or like a story that I'm trying to comprehend, um, I'm like reading every word individually and then putting everything together to try to like form something, um, to like, make sure I remember it or whatever. This, like, I didn't have to remember it, so I was just like looking at it, said "Daisy," and then last name came up and then I didn't, and then I just stopped. I just stopped saying "Daisy" after "Daisy." Like if it had said "Daisy Jones," I would have said the word "Jones," but like I got hit like a roadblock.

32:17 AK: Okay. Well, it seems like when you said "Daisy" it, it seemed like a reading thing. Is that right? [Ryan: Yeah. Yeah.] Okay. And now at this moment, when you're looking at the last name, does it seem like a reading thing? Or it's like this experience is different. I've left reading mode [Ryan: Yeah.] and I'm just staring mode.

32:34 Ryan: Yeah. Correct. It's not something I would typically... If I was reading that, like the name and like I had to absorb it, I would like say it in my head and sound it out. But I didn't have to because like, it's just a name and I didn't need, I didn't need this information.

32:54 AK: Okay. Then I think I'm good. [RTH: Me too.] Number six.

32:59 Ryan: Uh, that's it. I don't have a six.

33:02 AK: No worries. Cool.

INFORMAL Q/A STARTS HERE

- 33:08 RTH: So I think we're doing good. I'm in favor of doing this more time.
- 33:12 Ryan: I am too.
- 33:15 AK: Me too.
- 33:15 RTH: And I would say, I would say that we have more beeps around the computer, then we have in other things. So.
- 33:22 Ryan: I'm always on it. So...
- 33:23 RTH: So maybe the way it is, I'm not trying to talk us out of that, but....
- 33:29 Ryan: You want me to try to do it in a different setting?
- 33:33 RTH: If that's convenient. What we're gonna do is we're gonna...[inaudible] You and Alek are going to pick a time when we're going to do this again. And then if it's convenient to do it in some, then I think it might be interesting, useful, whatever to try a different setting. But I'm not, I'm not imposing that. I'm recognizing that life goes on and....
- 33:55 Ryan: Yeah. Yeah. I'm just trying to think of like times I could do it. I'm gonna be on a plane on Sunday. So maybe I can do it during traveling. [Alek: Yeah.]
- 34:07 RTH: That could be interesting. We would. We would meet on Monday.
- 34:09 Ryan: Yeah. Yeah.
- 34:11 AK: I can do that. Is that the sixth? I can do that. [Ryan: Mm hm.] Is there a time that would work for you on the sixth, Ryan? If you're on a plane, maybe you're somewhere else and got to work around some stuff?
- 34:28 Ryan: So I could do like evening again, like Monday evening, like five-ish.
- 34:36 RTH: I can do anytime. So you don't...
- 34:39 AK: I'll do, I'll reach out to you in a little, in a couple of days, maybe when you know better, but I can do anytime Monday.
- 34:45 Ryan: Okay. That works for me.
- 34:46 AK: Then we should probably be okay. [Ryan: Alright] Cool.
- 34:51 Ryan: Yeah. Sorry. I was, I was a little rattled today. I w I, I felt like I couldn't help you out. I wasn't able to like explain things well.
- 35:02 RTH: I didn't have that impression. I thought, I thought we were....

- 35:04 Ryan: Really? Huh! Maybe some beeps are just easier to talk about than others. [RTH: I think (inaudible)]
- 35:11 AK: As actually, as you get more skilled, you start to raise more questions, right? Like the, whatever one where you were like, I don't know if this is a reading, my typing or a typing my thoughts, you know, that was *your own* interest that brought that question to light. And it's a very interesting one. And it leaves us with sort of question marks, but it says something about like your skill at knowing these distinctions now, I think. Like you're *interested* now, and I want to get to the bottom of that and, and it's going to leave you with some question marks for a while, maybe forever. I don't know.
- 35:46 Ryan: How do you guys know that something is not happening, or a process that just like you guys *simply just can't fathom*, like that, like, it's just not part of your experience. So like there's no way that you could like figure this out, figure things out. Like it's just completely different to what you guys experience. Do you ever feel like you experienced that?
- 36:10 RTH: Well, we do and, and part of the reason that we do multiple interviews, multiple *interviewers* is so, so Alek has a different sensitivity than I do. And that, that *minimizes* that possibility. But I think in the *Lena* interviews, we came upon something after like seven or eight or nine days of sampling that (I can't remember exactly what the deal was, but something about meta-awareness) [Alek: Yeah.] that Lena had been trying to tell us about since day one, basically. And she didn't really know how to tell us. And she didn't, we didn't really know how to understand her. But I don't think we really came to an understanding until very late in the, in the process. And so the answer to your question is when, well, (a) we're never really sure because it could be that it's, that there's nothing to stop it from, from you, from the situation being: Ryan knows exactly what he's talking about; he's saying the same thing all the time; and Russ and Alek don't understand what he's saying all the time; and so the communication is, what can we entirely miss that all the way along? That is a possibility. We guard against that possibility by having, you'd have to be swinging and missing both Alek and me at the same time. *And* we are very careful listeners. And so if you're saying something that just doesn't ring, right, exactly true to me, I'm gonna, I'm gonna be trying to question you and on the *possibility* that you're trying to tell me something that I haven't yet figured out. So if you're telling me if you're telling me something that I, that I understand, then the words that you use will, will have the same frequency and, and connotation and denotation and whatever that I would expect. But if you somehow use a word that isn't exactly *right*, in my understanding, then I'm going to question my understanding. Could be that you just were sort of sloppy in using a word. Could be that I didn't understand what you were saying. Could be a lot of things. But we don't, we don't let those kinds of things slide, I guess, is what I would say.
- 38:19 Ryan: So I read, um, like your summaries of Lena's experience on your website. And like, I saw that you, I don't know if it was you or her drew the picture of like the vortex with like sensing things.

- 33:19 Russ comments: Ryan is referring to what is written in the May 28, 2020 "Current Status" update on the website http://hurlburt.faculty.unlv.edu/lena/do_I_have_internal_monologue_sampling_lena.html
- 38:34 RTH: Right. That's what I was talking about. [Ryan: Um.] We didn't really, we, we... She used the word "sensing," ([To Alek: When did we figure that out? Maybe on the very first day or second day or something like that? [Alek: Yeah.]) And we counted them up. She used the word "sensing" 50 or 80 or something times. [Alek: Yeah. 76 or something like that.] And, and we knew that we didn't know what we were talking about. She was using "sensing" and we didn't understand it. And she knew that she was using "sensing" and that she didn't really understand and for sure we didn't understand. [Alek: Yeah.] So we, we were working hard at what "sensing" meant, if anything. It could be that she's just used "sensing" in an unusual way--she means the same thing as everybody else does. And we came to the conclusion, I think, that sensing was something like meta-awareness or something. (I actually forget right now exactly what conclusion we came to.) But it was in that ballpark.
- 39:26 AK: Yeah. And I think after like, we, it finally started to click around day 10, but we had known for a while that like, this is just a beast to figure out. Like we cannot, I mean, we're leaving every interview with a lot of question marks around what this *sensing* thing is. But Lena was really unequivocal. She just said, no, there's this *thing*, and I'm trying to describe it to you. And we would just sort of throw up our hands at the end, like, Hey, we're doing the best we can, maybe we're going to get it. And I think that after day 10 or something, we [gestures to RTH and AK] spoke and said that it takes like breaking your own head open, which is sort of a crude metaphor, but to understand what Lena was describing. Like it is, it is what you were asking, where it's something that just neither of us understood at all. Apparently don't experience ourselves. And it just took like really like being upside down on your head to try to understand Lena from Lena's point of view.
- 40:23 Ryan: It's kind of like trying to describe a color to a blind person that's never seen color. It's like, it's impossible. Yeah. It's pretty wild. How do I know that I'm not experiencing that exact thing, but I just interpret it differently. Like I'm just using different words to explain it.
- 40:46 RTH: Well, I think that is a fundamentally interesting problem. And the answer, I think, is the answer that I gave a little bit ago, which, which is: you're gonna try to put it into words, and those words have a range of convenience and a center of the target and a penumbra around it or whatever. And you're going to do the best you can with the words that you've got to describe those, to describe your exper, experience. And then we're going to receive those words and, and, and we're, we're going to be reacting to all of those things. And if the, if the penumbra of the word seems off to the side from the denotation of the word, then we're going to say, "well, what the heck did you mean by that, Ryan?" Right? "Do you, you *mean* that?!? You, you, you used this word and instead of having a halo all the way around this word, the halo's all the way off to the side! Is that, is there something... is there something to that?" And we're going to be asking that in whatever skilled way that we can. We're not going to ask it exactly

like that, 'cause... But we're going to, we're going to say, well, "when you're saying this, do you really mean that?" And "when you're saying *this*, do you really mean *that*?" That kinds of, well, you've heard the kinds of questions that we ask. [Alek: Mm hm.] We're asking those questions to ascertain the possibility, to play around with the possibility, that you are explaining something that we're not accustomed to hearing.

42:14 RTH: [continues] But the, the interesting thing about it is that, that, that is genuinely the, one of the most interesting things that we do. [Ryan: Yeah. I don't..] I think I would call that a personal crossword puzzle, I mean, a three dimensional, crossword puzzle or something like that. We don't even know whether the words that we're using fit into the blanks that we've got! And, and so it's a, it is a challenge which seems to me (and I think the Alek as well) to be a, sort of a virtuous challenge. Because we're trying to get at Ryan the way Ryan actually is given the limitations of *his* limitations with language and our, and *our* limitations of language, our joint language limitation. Then we try to do that with Lena. And we try to do that with everybody else.

43:01 Ryan: Now, is there are any, are there anything, or is there anything that I have been saying or doing that's similar to that situation where like, you can't quite figure out what I'm talking about and it may be a little bit different? Or am I pretty square?

43:22 RTH: I don't think (Alek can have an opinion about this), but I don't, but in, in the Lena situations, Alek and I had fairly constant conversations about *what the heck did Lena mean by, by sensing* or something. I don't recall having that kind of conversation in your situation. There is some, the questions that we've been having *with you* has to do with, well, like your first example today in our lingo--so now I'm going to take us behind the curtain a little bit. [Ryan: Fine.] In our, in our lingo, your first, your first example today, I think in the first example (the one about you shouldn't take our word, take his word for it, people are ignorant about their own medical conditions or whatever that, that was), that is an example, pretty much a straight-ahead textbook example of what we call "unsymbolized thinking." And, and it has, we, we have wondered for the last while, whether you have this phenomenon of unsymbolized thinking. And we didn't say, on day two, when it looked like maybe this was going to be unsymbolized thinking, we didn't say, "Hey, Ryan, that's unsymbolized thinking! Why don't you just call it!" [Ryan: Yeah.] *Instead*, what we said was, "Well, we'll wait and we'll get some examples to that until *Ryan* says, as he did at the beginning, "well, this was like that one over there" which Alek and I would have recognized being unsymbolized thinking.

43:22 Russ comments: RTH is referring to when Ryan said about today's first sample (at 1:05), "It was similar to the one where I was like looking in the background of my professor's thing and thought about how younger people look, or rich people look younger." The point RTH is making is that the *concept* of unsymbolized thinking has emerged *to Ryan out of Ryan's own experiences*, without having been named or identified by the interviewers. Here on the sixth day, now that Ryan seems secure in his own understanding, RTH allows himself to call this phenomenon "unsymbolized thinking."

44:53 RTH: [continues] So now I feel, well, I can, I can use this word unsymbolized thinking, and it's not going to screw *Ryan* up because Ryan's pretty good at this, at this stuff. So what we mean when we say "unsymbolized thinking" is a pretty clear thought that, that does not have words and does not have visual imagery, and does not have any other symbols, which is why we call it "unsymbolized." And yet it's clearly before the footlights of consciousness. This is not just a *gist*. It wasn't like there was some *gist* that, that Ryan was saying, well, you know, people don't, people are medically illiterate, or whatever. This was a specific, before-the-footlights-of-consciousness experience. And that is what an unsymbolized thinking is for us, unsym, of our technical term is it's a, it's a directly experience, quite specific, well-differentiated, before-the-footlights-of-consciousness experience. [Ryan: Interesting.] And, and it generally takes a while for people to become confident of that, because people think that all thinking has to be in words, and you gotta get over that.

46:08 Ryan: Yeah. That's why that on that exact example is like the ones that I had trouble explaining, because there is, it is unsymbolized. There's no symbols to actually like refer to or explain. So does that make sense?

46:08 Russ comments: Recall that Ryan had said (34:54) "I felt like I couldn't help you out. I wasn't able to like explain things well." Fifteen or so years ago, I transcribed a Q/A session that had taken place during a lecture I was giving. My intention was to use it in a book I was writing at the time, but it got edited out. But it's relevant here because it demonstrates that Ryan's difficulty is not unusual:

Q: How do they typically report unsymbolized thinking? How do they describe that?

A: Typically? [Questioner: Yes.] They come in for the second sampling day and say, "I want to quit the project. I can't do what you're asking me to do here." I'm telling you, this is not a joke -- this is what they say: "I'm not a good subject and I want out." And the reason for that is they believe that thinking must take place in words or images or whatever, and then they're confronted in their own sampling with the inability to find words or images. They think that they must therefore be inadequate -- they can't find what obviously has to be there. So I reassure them and say, "Well, let's stick it out for a little while and see what happens when we talk about today's beeps. And then the next time they come back they will say, "I was having a thought about...." And I'll ask whether they're sure it was a thought -- maybe it was a feeling. "Oh, definitely it was a thought, but it didn't have any words." And then after that it becomes, "Well, this thought is like the one we talked about yesterday, where I was thinking something without words."

46:23 RTH: But that doesn't mean that the experience isn't there. So I think you're, you are a pretty much a textbook example of what unsymbolized thinking looks like. [Alek: Yeah.] And, and I'm happy to have this out there on the web so that when people would say, well, you know, you're just talk people out of, you interviewers, you just, you just tell people that, but you make a gist, you make out of a gist into something which is actually before the footlights of consciousness. Well, this example is going to

be good. I can say, well, you know, if you believe that, watch the Ryan videos. That's going to take you six hours, but you can, you can watch what happens. And you can see that by the time we get to day six, he has, on his own, with our, with our differentiation maybe, but on his own, come to the notion that what he thought was going to be in words is not always in words. So that he can think without... He can experience himself as thinking without having words or other symbols involved in it.

47:22 Ryan: Hmm. What's that uh psych experiment with the little kid that was scared of mice? What was the of that?

47:33 AK: Where would they conditioned? Conditioned him to be scared?

47:36 Ryan: Little something. I feel like.

47:39 AK: Little Albert?

47:40 RTH: Yeah. Little Albert. I'm your little Albert for, for this. [they laugh] So if you ever need to, to (except, this is way less traumatizing, I feel like to me, than it is him). So I could be your subject for that.

47:53 RTH: Well, the difference here is that I don't think we imposed this on you. And this is, this is, this has been a characteristic of Ryan throughout his adult life, [Ryan: Absolutely.] before we came along, and he didn't know about it. And that's the way, that's the way this is, this, this experience is. Many psychologists, maybe most psychologists, have a hard time believing that this is possible. [Ryan: Yeah.] Because most, most psychologists are verbal kinds of people. And so they, they think that it has to be in words.

47:53 Russ comments: RTH doesn't really think that "most psychologists are verbal kinds of people," and would prefer that he hadn't said that. He really should have said something like, "Most psychological theories are couched in words."

48:23 AK: Yeah. I think, um, as I recall, like maybe even on day one, you were describing things like unsymbolized thinking, and you were saying like, "this is hard to describe because there are no words." But your experience was stubborn. You couldn't say there were words and you stood by that and you were faithful to the experience. And you said, "you guys, this is weird for me and confusing, and I don't know what to say, but there weren't words here." So I think it is, I mean, a testament to you being open to that. But also like your experience--it is what it is. So to your earlier point about, you know, *maybe* am I like Lena, but I just interpret it differently? I really doubt that. I think that we don't ask questions about interpretation. We ask questions about reality. Did this happen? What color was it? Was it tall? Was it short? You know, um, interpretations are presuppositions really. And, and you know how we feel about those.

49:17 Ryan: So you were saying that I was like strict on the fact that I was having this experience. Um, but someone commented on one of his videos, Dr. Hurlburt's videos, saying that I was trying to, uh, just prove my point, that like, I wasn't being honest. Do you believe

that I'm being honest with this experience? Like, do you have, do you feel like I'm trying to skew the narrative of, of this?

49:44 AK: I have not had that impression.

49:46 RTH: I have not had that impression at all. I have thought that you were mistaken about some things in a presuppositional kind of a way, but I've always had the impression that you were working at trying to be as accurate as you can get.

50:01 Ryan: In your face, dude. [they laugh].

50:01 Russ comments: If Ryan had been trying to skew the narrative, it would likely have been in the direction of *more* words, not less. His original presupposition was that he had constant internal monologue. It would have been easier for him to presuppositionally insert words into actual unsymbolized thoughts than for him to delete words from actual internal monologue.

50:03 RTH: Um, so, so I'm, I'm, I also happily accept the fact that, that there are people out there who could put one over on me entirely and I would never know. [Ryan: Mm hm.] [Alek: Sure.] I don't think it happens very often, but I don't discount the possibility. And you might be him!

50:21 Ryan: I would be a sociopath if I could do that.

50:24 RTH: That's right.

50:26 AK: We hope you're not.

50:26 Ryan: No, I'm, I'm, I'm trying my best. I had another question. Um, Oh yeah. So like Lena had that experience that you couldn't break down. That was maybe something that you haven't seen often or ever at all. Is there any other examples of that from other people that are just like, that really caught your attention? That was, that was really fascinating, too?

50:48 RTH: Well, unsymbolized thinking is one of those. When I, when I, when I started this, this sampling deal 40 something years ago (or however long ago that was), I didn't believe that unsymbolized thinking was a possibility. When people, people would say, well, you know, I, I was thinking, but I can't remember, and then they just sort of m, mumble, mumble their way out of it. And then they would say they want to quit because they would, the typical subject would say, well, I'm not a good subject. I can't, I can't do this. And I would think in my, at that time, well, you know, you're *not* a very good subject! You can't even put into words these things! So it took me a while to accept that there was a phenomenon here that they were just having trouble describing and that I was having trouble hearing.

51:40 Ryan: Hmm. Interesting. Alright.

51:47 RTH: Alright. So you all are going to figure out a time. It's likely to be Monday and, uh, Alek is going to tell me when it's going to be.

51:57 AK: You got it.

51:58 Ryan: Sounds good.

52:00 RTH: Alright. Thank you very much.

52:01 Ryan: Thanks everyone.