

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY

Tristan

Tristan Interview 1

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the January 18 interview with Tristan that is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/MB2s892h3tA>. 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

AG = Amber Goto

Tristan = Tristan

- 0:02 RTH: So the recording is going on.
- 0:03 Tristan: Mm hmm.
- 0:06 RTH: And you said before I started the recording that we had beeper problems. What was the deal there?
- 0:11 Tristan: Yeah. Well, I guess I was a bad student yesterday and uh, I'm assuming I did something wrong. So, so I, I, I turned the beeper on and then it has the constant beep, and then I, I press, pressed the button to, to get it to stop beeping. Is, is that what I'm supposed to do, right?
- 0:31 RTH: Yep. Yep.
- 0:32 Tristan: Um, so I did that and then it gave me a beep and then it followed that with...
- 0:40 RTH: And when you say it gave you a beep, you mean immediately or 10 minutes later, or a half an hour?
- 0:44 Tristan: No, it gave me a beep after sometime within the hour.
- 0:45 RTH: Okay.
- 0:45 Tristan: And then it, it, it gave me the beep and then it went to the constant chirping, sorta like the fire alarm chirp pretty shortly after. Right. And what, what did you say the fire alarm chirp was again, that was?
- 1:02 RTH: That's, that's the beeper telling you that the ba, that the in, instrument is uh, trying to save its battery. So the, so the, let's go, let's go back a, a notch here. So the, you got the first beep, 20 minutes or so, something like that after the, after you turned it on?
- 1:17 Tristan: Right, right. 40 or something like that.

1:18 RTH: And then did you stop the beep by pushing the white button then?

1:22 Tristan: Um, I think so.

1:28 RTH: If you're not sure about that, that would be what, what, what, [Tristan: Oh.] what got us into the, into, into the issue.

1:32 Tristan: So you need to stop, okay, so, so maybe so I didn't stop it, I think.

1:36 RTH: Right.

1:36 Tristan: So, so it went into chirping. So it chirps when you don't stop it after.

1:39 RTH: That's right.

1:41 Tristan: Okay. So then it, that is my fault. So then I, I thought it might be a battery issue, so I bought new batteries and put them in, but that was a while later. Um, and then I've been waiting what seems like, what's definitely more than an hour for the, for the next beep. Um, and yeah, it's on, so maybe I put the batteries in wrong, in that case.

2:06 RTH: So push the white button down and hold it down and does it give you the square wave?

2:09 Tristan: Yeah, it does.

2:11 RTH: Then, then it's the square, the square wave, [Tristan: Then it's not the battery.] the square wave means, well, everything is working and it's, and it, it is un, it is enroute to making another beep.

2:11 Russ comments: **Q:** Wouldn't it have been better to have provided a better training session on the previous day, so that we could have avoided these problems with the beeper?
A: No, I don't think so. The object of DES is to help Tristan apprehend his own inner experience, *not* to teach him to employ a correct method. That is, what is important is for Tristan to become aligned with Tristan, *not* for him to be efficiently aligned with a procedure (or with me). Those are very different things. One is to recognize Tristan as a subject, the other is to treat Tristan as an object. Part of the price to be paid is that the beginning of a DES investigation is *not* efficient.

2:22 Tristan: Right. So it, I'm, I'm just surprised cuz I think I got, I set that more than an hour ago, so I'm, so I, I thought I was at least gonna get one or two more good beeps in before our, our convo, but I didn't.

2:35 RTH: So do, so do we have one beep, is that?

2:38 Tristan: We have a single beep.

- 2:39 RTH: We have a single beep. Well, I would say we oughtta talk about that beep. And, and have we cleared up the, the issue? So what, so where we've gone wrong here is that you need to *stop* the beep.
- 2:52 Tristan: Right.
- 2:52 RTH: So the, the sequence basically that we have in mind is:
- 2:55 Tristan: Yeah.
- 2:55 RTH: I, I hear the beep. I pay attention to what, I try to freeze what was going on in my experience.
- 3:02 Tristan: Right.
- 3:02 RTH: Then I *stop* the beep; and then I write down something about it.
- 3:06 Tristan: Right. Um, okay, so I have one beep.
- 3:09 RTH: Alright.
- 3:09 Tristan: And even that, I don't think I was the best in, in capturing the, the fine details of the experience, but I have something.
- 3:17 RTH: Okay, let's do it.

SAMPLE 1.1 DISCUSSION STARTS HERE

- 3:19 Tristan: Um, so I was reading the word "educators," and I was innerly hearing "educators" or sounding "educators." Um, and I also had a more diffuse nonverbal feeling that what I had written was bad because I, so I was reading over my own something I had written and I was stopping on the word "educators." And then outside of that I had a feeling that the sentence wasn't right, that there was something wrong with it.
- 4:08 RTH: Okay. And so let's, so, so is that the, the initial description there, so shall we [Tristan: Yeah.] talk about, talk about some pieces of that. Alright, so I'm, I'm reading something that I've written and is that on the computer or written on paper or?
- 4:29 Tristan: Uh, this was something, a document I had written on the computer, in a Word doc.
- 4:35 RTH: Okay. And, and is it fair, fair or to say that I am reading the word "educators," or I am reading a sentence that includes the word "educators" and the beep happens to get me at the word "educators"?
- 4:48 Tristan: The latter.
- 4:51 RTH: So, so I'm reading a sentence, which is something like "in 1979, the educators" *beep*.

4:57 Tristan: Yep, that's right.

4:59 RTH: Okay. So it's not like I have singled out the word "educators" and focused on that. It's that I am reading a sentence, which is, does include the word "educators" and the beep catches me in the, in, in mid-sentence.

5:13 Tristan: Right, yeah.

5:14 RTH: So I'm understanding then that I'm reading a sentence and the beep catches me in the mid-sentence. And the, and the word, the word happened to be "educators"?

5:23 Tristan: Hmm.

5:23 RTH: Okay.

5:24 Tristan: Yeah.

5:24 RTH: Then uh, "I'm innerly sounding that"?

5:32 Tristan: Yes.

5:33 RTH: And what does that mean?

5:36 Tristan: Um, [pause] I'm innerly, I'm thinking of the word "educators," like that word is in my consciousness somehow, but I don't know if I am, I'm not hear, I'm not hearing it. I'm just focused on, on that word.

6:03 RTH: So lemme start by asking the same kinda questions that I was asking just a minute ago. So are we talking about *that word* or are we talking about the sentence up to and including that word?

6:16 Tristan: Um, I have a comprehension of the sentence. Um, but my, but I'm sort of stopping on that word and innerly re, repeating "educators" to myself in my mind.

6:29 RTH: So there's some, so there's something discrete about "educators" [Tristan: Yeah.] that is separate from the rest of the sentence as far as my, my experiences, my re, repeating experience or articulating or whatever experience is.

6:43 Tristan: Right, yeah. I think I am. Yeah, I dunno If sounding is the right word I'm, [RTH: Okay.] but that is what's coming in my inner, um, consciousness is that particular word.

6:55 RTH: And is it a repetitive "educators," "educators," "educators"? Or is it just "educators"?

7:07 Tristan: No, it's not repetitive, but it's, it's, I'm, I'm innerly saying that to myself. So I'm, I'm, I'm focused on, I'm focused on that particular word at that particular moment.

7:16 RTH: Okay. So let, let's use the verb innerly saying without, without trying to be too critical about that at the moment. But so what, what I, I'm still sort of on the, on the track

that I haven't yet totally resolved. And that is, so am I innerly saying "educators" or am I innerly saying this whole sentence and the beep catches me at "educators"? I shouldn't say the whole sentence, I should say the sentence up till now. So "in 1979, [Tristan: Um.] the educators" *beep*, so have I articulated in this inner, innerly saying?

- 7:56 Tristan: I'm not, I'm not quite, um, and, but I, I haven't done the same thing with every single word in this sentence for as, so I haven't done it with "as"; I haven't done it with "in"; y'know. I've sort of, I'm reading this sentence and then I sort of la, latched onto the word "educators."
- 8:16 RTH: Okay.
- 8:16 Tristan: And I innerly, um, and I'm, and I'm thinking of that word.
- 8:26 RTH: Okay.
- 8:26 Tristan: Um, now this is the part where I, I didn't, my notes aren't very detailed, maybe cuz I was too anxious over if I was doing it right.
- 8:35 RTH: Right.
- 8:35 Tristan: So and the beep was.
- 8:35 RTH: And, and so, so that, [Tristan: Yeah.] this is the way the first sampling day always is. So I'm, I'm totally happy with, with our conversation here. And I, I'm not expecting you to be good at it on the first day. I'm expecting us to have to figure out what we need to, what we need to get good at. And then that'll make it easier the next time around. I think maybe. We'll, we'll, we'll see about that.
- 8:56 Tristan: Yeah.
- 8:56 RTH: So, so I think I've got the, I think I've got the timing, the issue sorta resolved as far as we're gonna get it today, but so now let's, let's move towards the inner saying, articulating, sounding, hearing, I think we've used a bunch of different words for that.
- 9:14 Tristan: Mm hmm.
- 9:14 RTH: And, and it seems like it's just the word "educators"?
- 9:19 Tristan: Mm hmm.
- 9:19 RTH: So in some way I am present, presenting to myself, I'm, I am somehow particularizing "educators" for myself?
- 9:34 Tristan: Mm hmm, right.

- 9:36 RTH: And, and does that seem like a, a saying thing? Like I'm speaking this to myself, I'm, I'm understanding there's no words coming outta my actual mouth, but does it seem like I'm speaking? Or does it seem like I'm hearing? I hear?
- 9:50 Tristan: Yeah. I would call it a type of, I, I would most associate it with inner speech, which is not an actual speech, but just sorta what I understand is whenever I think of something and present a word to myself in my mind that's, I think I call it inner speech, I guess.
- 10:12 RTH: Okay.
- 10:12 Tristan: Um.
- 10:12 RTH: So the one, one of the, the interesting challenges of our, of our experience is, of our, of our time together is going to be to [Tristan: Mm hmm.] try to sort out what we mean by these terms. So [Tristan: Right.] we have to, we have to start with the assumption that what *you* mean by "inner speech" and what *I* mean by "inner speech" might not be the same thing, might *be* the same thing. [Tristan: Yeah, that's true.] I'm not, I'm not, I'm not disagreeing with you, or not believing you, or whatever. I'm just saying if, if we're gonna understand each other, we gotta make sure we un, we understand.
- 10:39 Tristan: Right.
- 10:39 RTH: So this doesn't, so let's start with the distinction between speaking and hearing. This is more like producing words than it is like hearing? And the distinction there might be something like if you speak into a tape recorder, that's one thing. And if you hear your voice coming back out of a tape recorder, that's quite a different experience for most people. And it's not, I'm not just talking about the timbre or whatever, but that in one case I'm producing the words and in the other case I'm receiving?
- 11:09 Tristan: Yeah. It seems to me more like a producing kind of thing, because it's focused on sort of the vowels and the formation of the sounds without actually moving my lip, lips.
- 11:25 RTH: Okay. So that, that would?
- 11:27 Tristan: I think it, I think it starts from like, I think it's starting from a speech without necessarily thinking strongly of forming that speech, but.
- 11:40 RTH: Okay. So one, one of the things that I want us to learn over the, over the course of our time together is the, [Tristan: Mm hmm.] to distinguish between what, what would have to happen in the natural world and what has to happen in experience. And I would like us to recognize that those two things might be entirely different from each other.
- 11:57 Tristan: Right.

11:57 RTH: So in the real world, it probably, speech probably has something more to do with vowels than consonants or something like that. And the consonants get added later or whatever. That might, might very well be true in the real world. But that's not at all *necessarily* true in the experiential world. [Tristan: Mm hmm.] So I would, what I would like is to what I call *bracket away* the, [Tristan: Right.] the actual world. So maybe it's, maybe it's that way, maybe it's not in the real world. But let's not presume anything from the real world into the, into the experiential world.

So I'm gathering that this is a more of a *productive* thing than it is a *receptive* thing. I am somehow producing the word "educators," [Tristan: Mm hmm.] not the whole sentence, but I am, I am producing for myself, in myself, of myself, whatever.

12:52 Tristan: Right.

12:52 RTH: I am producing "educators" as I exteriorly read this sentence.

13:01 Tristan: Right. Yep.

13:01 RTH: Okay. And is there anything more to be said about the experience of this producing "educators"?

13:13 Tristan: Only that I think my, my knowledge of how I, how exactly that's done may improve in the future.

13:22 RTH: Okay. And that's, that's what the first day is always about. We, we want it, we want, we want descriptions to be sorta *bad* on the first day. That's not... [Tristan: Right.] Be, because the alternative is to have really *good* descriptions on the first day. And if we have really good descriptions on the first day, then those are almost always presuppositional, or theoretical, or whatever. [Tristan: Right.] And uh, and our job is to *set aside* those presuppositions and theories and, and whatever. So we wanna, sometimes I say it's sorta like wading into the water. We're not swimming yet! We're we're, we're getting wet. We're, we're [Tristan: Yeah.] moving towards swimming, and, and, uh, we're gonna figure out what kind of strokes we need to make once we get there.

13:22 Russ comments: RTH's 13:22 turn is a good description of the DES *iterative* aspect. DES is *not* meant to be efficient (see the comment at 2:11)—in fact, the superficial yet powerful attraction of efficiency is an *enemy* of the deeper and difficult aspiration toward fidelity.

14:11 RTH: (continues) So lemme, lemme restate what I have heard here. I'm reading, it's not like I've *stopped* reading, but I am reading what I've written so far and, and I am articulating the word "educators." And I may have articulated some words before that, but it's not like I'm articulating the whole sentence. I have somehow particularized this particular word.

14:37 Tristan: Mm hmm. Yeah.

14:37 RTH: And then, beyond that, there is some kind of a feeling that something's not right here.

14:49 Tristan: Yeah.

14:49 RTH: And what, tell me more about that, [Tristan: Um.] if there is anything you can say about that.

14:54 Tristan: This is a general, it's sort of this whole experience of sounding this word to myself is tinged with negativity and anxiety that the sentence I have written is not right or appropriate or, or the right thing to say that, that this is not the right word, that I should not be talking about these "educators" at all.

15:23 RTH: So does that seem like a cognitive thing or affective thing? I'm analyzing my sentence.

15:30 Tristan: Affective, af, affective. I, I'd say, um, in that this is sorta like what's coloring my entire experience of reading the sentence. And I don't, when I'm reading, sounding "educators," I'm not, this is sort of, this is sort of how I'm feeling about what I'm, what I'm saying.

15:57 RTH: Okay. So it's not like I have analyzed what I have said and determined on the basis of some cognitive process, *this isn't right, I shouldn't be calling 'em "educators," I should be calling 'em something else* or something?

16:07 Tristan: Yeah.

16:07 RTH: This is more, it just doesn't feel right, it feels?

16:13 Tristan: Yeah.

16:15 RTH: And that feeling is anxiet-ish anxiety-ish?

16:19 Tristan: Yeah.

16:20 RTH: And was there another, I think there was, you used another word other than anxiety, but I forget what it was.

16:26 Tristan: Yeah so maybe I was talking about it being wrong, I guess.

16:30 RTH: Okay. So some wrongness. But it's not wrong in, in just the sense of being incorrect. It's wrong in the sense of being...

16:39 Tristan: Not the right word.

16:40 RTH: ...fundamentally wrong or anxiety-arousing wrong or...

16:44 Tristan: Yeah.

16:45 RTH: ...organismically wrong, or something.

16:48 Tristan: Right.

16:49 RTH: And, and does that sense of wrongness seem directly present to you? So the, the, the distinction that I'm trying to turn, tease apart here is: it *could be* that I'm saying "educators" in such a way that reflects the fact that it's not the right word. I'm saying "educators," and, and it's got the inflection that's wrong. So I, I am, I am indicating in the saying of it that it's not the right word. *Or* does it seem like I feel a, a wrongness sort of in parallel with this saying of wrong?

17:31 Tristan: Um, well, I'm having trouble distinguishing between the two things you said, but, um, I think it would be more, more the latter, is that I'm feeling a wrongness in parallel with everything I'm, I'm reading it in this sentence and I have fixated on the word "educators." So maybe it's not necessarily that "educators" is wrong, it's just that everything I'm doing with this sentence is, is wrong.

17:59 RTH: Okay. So the dis, the distinction that I was trying to make is A possibly not possible to make. So it could be that the reason you're having difficulty is that I'm asking something that's not possible. But the distinction that I'm trying to trying to get to is whether, whether this anxiety, wrongness stuff is directly present to you.

18:20 Tristan: Mm hmm.

18:20 RTH: And so even, even if you weren't speaking the word, I would still feel this, this, this is separable enough for the word that it's possible for me to imagine not speaking the word, but still feeling this wrong, wrongness theme.

18:33 Tristan: Yeah. De, definitely, I, I would say it's that, yeah.

18:40 RTH: Okay. And is there anything more to be said about how that presents itself to you?

18:47 Tristan: Um, no, because I wasn't able to record it in enough fidelity to my liking. Um, [RTH: Okay.] yeah. I got too anxious about the beeps.

19 RTH: Okay.

19 Tristan: Um.

19:04 RTH: So that's totally fine.

19:05 Tristan: I, I wrote down, I wrote down doubt over, so it's not just a wrongness, but, but a, but like a, a, there's, there's a doubt to, to y'know, that what I'm doing is correct.

19:21 RTH: Okay. And how, how does, how does doubt, how does that doubt-wrongness-anxiety, is it like, is this like a bodily thing, or a mental thing or...? And by *mentally* I, I just mean not bodily. Or is that?

19:34 Tristan: It has something to do with the fact that it's not just a wrongness, but that it's a wrongness that I could do otherwise. Um, that because I'm, because I'm wondering

whether to change the words or not. So it's a, is it an, are these the right words? Or should I pick other words?

19:58 RTH: Okay.

20:01 Tristan: Um, and whether it's bodily, [pause] um, yeah, I don't, I dunno in what capacity it's bodily or cognitive I.

20:21 RTH: Okay.

20:21 Tristan: Yeah.

20:21 RTH: So, so these, these are fundamentally difficult and perhaps impossible distinctions to make, but lemme, lemme, lemme sorta, maybe exaggerate what the difference could be. So in a *purely cognitive* world, I could say, well, I read the sentence, that sentence, that sentence has some incorrect implications, and I could, I could judge that on the basis of the word choice or whatever. And maybe I should write some other words, which would, would, that could be sort of a purely cognitive thing.

20:52 Tristan: Mm hmm.

20:52 RTH: Or it could be that I'm reading those sentences and [mimes an exaggerated deflated feeling] it just, it, it attacks, attacks me or something.

21:05 Tristan: Yeah. I think all these negative feelings are quite, are quite bodily at that moment. I think there's a, a, a bodily feeling of *not rightness*, I should do something else. Yeah. There's, there's not a good, good bodily feeling at this moment.

21:23 RTH: Okay. And then lemme, lemme expand also. And that is that, that the *feeling* aspect, which I have, which I mimed as being sorta bodily, that feeling aspect can be just as mental as it is in the body. So for some people, some people can have very clear emotional feelings and they're *not at all* bodily. And other people can have very clear emotional feelings and, and (coughs; excuse me,) they would say, well, I feel it in my heart or in the left side of my chest, or I feel my body tense up or whatever. I don't think there's any reason to think that one of those is better or worse or whatever than the other. We can have, we can have directly apprehended emotions, which I call feelings that are bodily, and we can have directly apprehended emotions that are mental.

22:12 Tristan: Mm hmm.

22:12 RTH: Which I, and by mental, I mean not bodily.

22:15 Tristan: Yeah. Um, yeah, that's the thing I'll have to keep watching out for. I, I, I could definitely say that it's somewhere in between those two polls. It's not, it's not like a doubt that's locatable somewhere. Um, it, it's, it'd be, yeah. I'll, I'll have to keep an eye out for, for how much is mental and how much is bodily.

- 22:36 RTH: Okay. So, so I got a couple of sorta meta convers, comments to make about this. One is I, what I would like us to do is I would like us to say everything that we talked about today, we should forget about,
- 22:50 Tristan: Okay.
- 22:51 RTH: ...going, going forward. So we made a, we made a distinction between speaking and hearing, well, maybe there was a distinction between speaking and hearing. And we made a distinction about, well, this is one word at a time, not one word at a time. Let's, let's *not* particularize, let's not, let's not think ab, think about those things as being, well, these are important things that we gotta watch for.
- 23:10 Tristan: Right, okay. Right.
- 23:11 RTH: *Instead*, what I would like us to do is to say, well, here, here we are intelligent people who are talking to each other, trying to figure out how to talk to each other about things, which we don't really know how to do that yet. And we sorta talked about the distinction between this and that and between bodily and mental and between whatever. But maybe those were the wrong things to be talking about. That was our, that was our first stab at it.
- 23:35 Tristan: Mm hmm.
- 23:35 RTH: Good. Well, and good, fine. I'm not, I'm not complaining about what we talked about. But what I don't want us to, to do is to be sort of *trapped* into that or, or to, uh, overemphasize that going forward. So I *don't* want you to pay particular attention to this because I know, well, Hurlburt's gonna be interested in the distinction between mental and bodily or whatever. That's not the point. So I *don't* want you to *try* to make, to, to try to have a catalog based on our first conversations here. What I *do* want you to do is to say, *well, he, he wants to know what's going on in my experience, and we're gonna have to struggle at putting these things into words. And I'm gonna have to figure out how to tell him so that he can understand.* And uh, and maybe the, maybe the, the next batch of experiences is gonna be totally different from this one. This might, this one might be the, an anomalous thing came from the first beep when the difficulties with the beeper and whatever, and, and future, future samples may have nothing to do with this.
- 24:37 Tristan: Mm hmm.
- 24:37 RTH: And that would be totally fine with me. It is something of the art of the method is to *not* be attached to whatever it is that we've said so far.
- 24:50 Tristan: Yeah.
- 24:50 RTH: So we're, what we're, what we're really, so I've given several lec, little mini lectures in here. What we're trying is to not be attached to anything, not being attached to the way the world works, and not being attached to theories about the world, and opinions about how my experience usually is, and what I've said to Hurlburt already

and all that, all that stuff. We're, we're gonna try to suspend, I use the word bracket in a nod to the phenomenologists, but the, but we're, we're gonna try to be not influenced by that, that stuff. We're gonna try to refine our ability to talk to each other about what seems to be directly presenting itself to Tristan at upcoming moments.

25:35 Tristan: Good. It's good. Yeah. I, I can bracket, I will bracket.

25:43 RTH: It's a challenge. It's a lifetime challenge, I would say actually. It's not, that's something that you can wake up one morning and say, *well, I think I'll bracket all this stuff*. That does, that's, that's sorta like waking up one morning saying, *well, I think I'll be a virtuoso violinist*. You know, we can, we can start working on the bow and we can start working on the finger and whatever, but it's gonna take us a while to figure out well, all that stuff and make music that sounds good.

26:09 Tristan: Okay, yeah.

26:11 RTH: So that's the one and only sample that we're gonna talk about today. Is that right?

26:15 Tristan: That's, that's all I got. Okay.

26:18 RTH: And what I would, what I would say is that, that we had a productive conversation about that because, and, and, uh, it, it's not about the content and the percentages and whatever. It's about how to talk about it. And I [Tristan: Right.] think we, we've, we've made some progress there.

26:38 Tristan: Yeah.

<<They Match Calendars>>

30:26 Tristan: Alright. Thanks Amber. Thanks Russ.

30:27 AG: Thank you.

30:27 Tristan: Enjoy your weekend.

30:28 RTH: Amber will send you a reminder tomorrow. Cool. Just because that's what we do.

30:36 Tristan: Alright.

30:38 RTH: Alright. Sounds good to me. Thanks.

