

TRANSCRIPT WITH COMMENTARY
Do I Really Have Internal Monologue?
Lena Interview 6:
Questions from Lena

Below in black is a word-for-word transcript of the March 12b interview with Lena that is available on YouTube at [youtu.be/- UrZ63ZTtk](https://youtu.be/-UrZ63ZTtk). 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
Lena = Lena

Over the weeks, some questions have occurred to Lena about the DES procedure and how we go about it. We temporarily sidestepped some of those questions because we did not want to bias the exploration of her own experience. We told Lena that we would be happy to answer any such questions when the time was right.

Now, after four days of sampling, we think that Lena is skilled enough in DES and secure enough in her commitment to her own investigation that our concern about our biasing it has lessened, so we invited Lena to ask whatever questions she liked.

Ground rules

00:00 RTH: So this is... now we've just had our fourth sampling day [see [Interview 5](#)]. And we were going to have some time for questions. [Lena: Yes.] And you had a question. [Lena: I did! I do.] And, and, and there... We have no rules for this, so you should feel free to ask whatever question. And I suppose it's possible that we might decline to answer a question, [Lena: Yeah.] but we have asked you to be forthright with us, and we think that it's only fair that we'd be forthright with you. So we will try to answer... We'll either... It's the same rules with you. If we start to answer a question, we'll try to give you a full answer. And if we say we don't think we should answer that question, then we'll say that explicitly.

Q: Is visual experience common? Are words common?

00:40 Lena: Got it. Okay. Um, well my first question is, um, 'cause right before the video ended [see [47:57 in Interview 5](#)] we were discussing about my proclivity to visual experiences. And um not really seeing or noticing the words so much as I expected to be. Um, so my question is, do you, is it common in your DES, um, studies that you see people who have very strong visuals? Or is it moreso that people are stronger in their words? Um, what is the common thing you see in looking at this sort of stuff, in your research?

01:24 RTH: That there are big individual differences [Lena: Yes.] and um, pretty much equal in that, in that division. I would say that there's more or less the same number of people who have strong words as there have strong imagery.

01:38 Lena: Hmm.

01:39 RTH: We don't have nearly enough people and we haven't done nearly the cross cultural and whatever studies that are required to, for me to have given a confident answer about that. So I tried to hedge it substantially, but...

01:52 Lena: Hmm.,

01:53 RTH: ...but I would say we have visual people and we have people who have a lot of words. [Lena: Um hm.] And I would say that we have a lot of people, like apparently you, who are mistaken [laughs] about which category they fall in. And there's no reason why people would actually know that their...

Q: Russ and Alek—What are your own inner experiences like?

02:14 Lena: Mm hm. And how would you, because you guys have done the DES experiment on your own selves as well, right? [Alek: Yeah.] How, what were your processes? Are you visual or wordy people? Or how would you describe what you are? In terms of this experiment.

02:34 RTH: So about me, I don't know the answer to that question. I've tried to keep myself pretty ignorant about that. I *think* I have a fair amount of unsymbolized thinking, and when I was a younger person, I think I had some other kinds of experiences. But, but I don't know the, I don't know the answer, [Lena (simultaneously): What do you mean by unsymbolized thinking?] I don't, I don't know the answer to that because I have systematically avoided trying to answer that question. And the reason for that is so, so that I could be, so that I could be a good listener for you. [Lena: Hmm. (nods affirmatively)] I thought it was probably a good idea for me to bracket my own experience and not, really sort of not care about my own experience. [Lena: Hmm.] Because then I wouldn't, well, *I want her to be like me! Or I want* [Lena: ...to relate, um hmm....] Yeah. So I have systematically not examined my own experience much. What I mean by unsymbolized thinking is to be, to be able... to have the experience, what we're calling here, the direct experience of thinking about something, but without any words or pictures or whatever.

03:36 Lena: [To Alek] Do you know [inaudible] or do you try to systematically bracket?

03:41 AK: I don't. [they laugh] I've done this like 37 times I've worn the beeper. I don't actually, like I have it all in spreadsheets, but I don't actually know. Um, I think I have a lot of sensory awareness. So like paying attention to colors and sensations and things like that.

04:00 Lena: Like your physical bodily sensations or like you're [inaudible]...

04:03 AK: Yeah, a lot of bodily sensations. But then also just like, um, like being drawn to the red of that cup, for example. So it's like I'm not really into the cup, but not really the fact that it's coffee, but I'm into the fact that... I'm into the red! Red is grabbing my attention, that kind of stuff. [Lena: Okay.] Um, so I had quite a bit of that and like a decent amount of inner speech. Um, I *don't* really have any imagery. I don't know that I would have said I did before or not. I'm not really sure about that. [Lena: Hmm.] I don't think I have any examples of inner seeing.

Q: What are you searching for in these studies?

04:33 Lena: So with this experiment, I know that you guys are trying to get to the, um, are you using the floodlights or footlights of consciousness? [Alek: Footlights.] Footlights. Okay. [Inaudible] Um, so in that, um, is it, does it matter to you how a person gets there? And when you do get to that point in a person's experience, what is it that you are, as you're, are you searching for something while they're in the footlight of consciousness? Or are you just trying to *prove* something? Right. I was still kind of undetermined what...

05:11 RTH: So those are fair questions. But I'm not sure that I understand 'em. So...

05:14 Lena: I'm not sure [inaudible].

05:14 RTH: How do you get your, how you get there? Did you mean developmentally? How did... How did... How did you learn to have visual experience?

05:23 Lena: No no no. So like how, okay... As the researcher, as you guys doing this experiment on people like me, and I'm telling you my experience, and we're doing the best that we can to understand the footlight of consciousness, uh, for my own self. [Alek: Um hm.] When we're in that, when we're finally in that, or realizing what my experience was in that moment, what are you guys looking for, in the footlight of experience?

05:50 RTH: Just, just exactly that.

05:53 AK: Whatever's there.

05:53 Lena: Whatever's there. And so when you, when you see whatever's there, what are you taking from it? What do you...

06:01 RTH: That's a great question, and, and, and I don't know the answer to that question and I doubt that Alek knows the question, she just, [Alek: I don't really understand the question.] she can answer for herself. It seems to me, and now I can speak for myself, but it seems to me, that it's sort of enough. [Lena: Okay.] And it's, and, y'know, why, why it's enough, I don't actually know the answer to that. I can, I can speculate about it, y'know, but "know thyself" is a pretty long-standing [Lena: Right.] whatever, an uh, "injunction" I guess you would say, that philosophers have thought for quite some time, but knowing yourself is a good deal. And this is sort of one aspect of yourself. This is, I'm, I, I know myself to be a visual person or I know myself to be a sensory awareness person, or whatever.

Q: Is your aim to help other people? Or to know people's possibilities?

06:55 Lena: So are you doing this to help other people better know themselves? Or do you do this so that for your research you can know the possibility of the self?

07:12 RTH: That would seem to be an easy question to answer. But for us, or for me, it is not an easy question. I would say I am doing it because it seems like a good thing to do.

07:24 Lena: Well, could it help? Like what could it...? I mean I know how it's helped *me* in terms of just being aware. But how could it, how could this become something that, um, helps people to be more conscious in their everyday experiences? And I guess paying attention: [Alek: Mm hm.]

07:45 RTH: I don't think I know the answer to that. [Lena: Okay.] It seems to me that it *likely* would be a good thing for people to be more attuned to what's going on with them. [Lena: Mmm.] But, but the, prediction of what, of why that would be a good thing would be sort of like the guy who invented the laser. I doubt that he thought, "ah, supermarket checkout!" when, when he watched some ruby crystal, y'know, vibrate. [Alek: Right.] That isn't what, that isn't what he was thinking. [Lena: Yeah.] And, and I think we're sort of in that basic science kind of kind of a view. *You* just said, "well it seemed valuable to me to find out some things about myself." And that, most people who are engaged in this exercise think that. And, and seem to be honest in re- re- relating it, [Lena: Um hm.] and seem to be genuinely thinking that, that I got some value out of this. [Lena: Mm hm.] Even though all we really did, we, we haven't, this has not been a therapeutic exercise. This has been a, let's just see whether we can get Lena's experience right on-- we've actually probably only looked at about 11 beeps or something like that.

Q: So is your aim simply to focus on *what* is occurring in experience?

08:56 Lena: Right. So you, one of what I've noticed and what I've learned so far is, um, in doing this exercise, you've made it very clear to, um, bracket away our own hypothesis or theories of *why* something is occurring. [Alek: Um hm.] Um, and mainly to just focus on, um, *what's* occurring?

09:21 RTH: That's exactly right. Couldn't have said it better myself.

Q: Do you think it's possible to focus on the *what* without theorizing about it?

09:27 Lena: Okay. Okay. And do you find that it's easy for people to even *know* what's occurring? Or do you think it's easier for people to theorize about what's occurring? Because I don't know that it is even possible to not do both, or mainly just theorize. 'Cause I had, *my* theory is that we create these mental representations and perceptions and we base our whole lives on these types of things. And it's not real. We could get very philosophical about... But I'm just wondering what you think of that. Like do you think it's possible to, to have that clear clarity of knowing what's happening in this exact moment without theorizing about it?

- 09:27 Lena wants to know whether it's possible to set aside (bracket) theory in the service of apprehending phenomena, and the upcoming exchange embodies the difficulty. The exchange is a bit difficult, so we will provide explanatory comments along the way.
- 10:13 RTH: So let me, let me ask you a question, which, and then we'll come back and answer that question. So, [Lena: Okay.] so do you think that it's possible that at the moment of all these beeps *you* (so we've had a dozen beeps or something like that) you are really talking to yourself and there is no... I'm really talking to myself, but then I make up this story about wavy images or whatever. [Lena: Yes.] And then that, and that just is, that's a red herring, y'know, away from the talking to myself. Do you think that's possible?
- 10:52 Lena: [Pauses quizzically] Can you ask the question in a different way? I want to see if I'm hearing you right.
- 10:55 RTH: So let's, let's think about the last beep that we were talking about. [Lena: Okay.] So the last beep.
- 11:00 Lena: Hmm. That was the, uh, radio interview. [She's referring to sample 4.2; see Interview 5 beginning at 19:49]
- 11:02 RTH: Well the last [inaudible], well there was a lot of stuff [Lena: Yes.] going on in that last beep. And of the stuff that was going on, there was no words other than I'm hearing [Lena: Right.] what the NPR guy was talking about. [Lena: Yeah.] I would like to know, what do you think about the possibility that *really* there was a lot of *Lena words* going on at that time, but for some reason you're not reporting that at the moment of the beep. Do you think that's possible?
- 11:02 RTH's intention was to ask Lena whether at beep 4.2 there was really a directly apprehended internal monologue ongoing, but she overlooked reporting it.
- 11:34 Lena: I couldn't say that it is not possible. Um, because I don't have a very objective way [laughs] of looking at myself. I don't feel objective when I look at myself. I don't, I guess I could be if I was like looking at myself while looking at myself, I'd have to go third person on myself, that kind of thing, if that makes sense. And that would mean I would have to shift my state of consciousness at the time of the beep to then look at myself looking at myself kind of thing. Or looking at myself as I'm experiencing reality, rather than, it's like I'm in the wave when I'm experiencing, and then the second the beep happens, I kind of have to go above the wave and look down at myself and say, "Oh yeah, this is, this is what was happening. This is what you were experiencing, this is what you're feeling and this is what you were visualizing."
- 11:34 But rather than respond about her directly apprehended experience, she gave a philosophical answer. (Hint: descriptions of directly apprehended experience do not contain double negatives. "I innerly saw a guy running around tapping microphones" is a description of directly apprehended experience. "I could not say that I did not innerly see a guy running around tapping microphones" is a theoretical analysis, not a

description of experience. RTH at 11:02 asked about description; Lena at 11:34 answered by theoretical analysis.

In a fundamentally important way, this interchange is acting out Lena's question, which could be restated, Is it possible to suspend analysis and stick with description? RTH is trying to answer Yes, but the conversation itself is evidence that at least for some people, "it's easier for people to theorize about what's occurring" (Lena, 09:33).

- 12:39 Um, is it possible that I'm missing out on the words that I'm choosing to have? Yes. Um, I, 'cause I can't say that anything for certain about what I'm doing and, or what I'm feeling, you know. I feel the human experience is too hard to understand because I'm, we're all super subjective, it seems like. But maybe there is--I would like to know in my own personal life, and maybe this is something that this experiment can do: Is my consciousness just this pure observant being that we all have and it's just a matter of knowing that it's there and bringing it forward.
- 13:25 RTH: So I don't know what consciousness is...
- 13:29 Lena: I don't either. I want to know, though, if there is [inaudible].]
- 13:31 RTH: ...and well, what I would, what I would say is that even in this particular beep, which was a pretty complicated beep, you were quite confident in describing the visual [Lena: Right.] aspect of it. You said, [Lena: Right.] "there was no question about it: this guy was runnin' around. It was oval shaped. There were microphones. I could see the cords, [Lena: Yep.] I couldn't see the walls. The walls were wavy or the walls were [inaudible]." There was... [Alek: Um hm.] And you *didn't* say at the same time, "I was saying to myself, quote, this is a weird guy going around and touching all those microphones unquote." [Lena: Um hm.] There... which is the kind of thing that I think you would have said early on before we did this kind of study. [Lena: Right.] That you engaged in that kind of stuff.
- 13:31 RTH is trying to bring the discussion back to directly apprehended experience: Lena described innerly *seeing* the guy, but she did *not* describe innerly *speaking about* the guy, even though the inner speaking would have aligned with her original self-theory. His point was that Lena apparently *can* set aside (bracket) her self-theory. But as we shall see, Lena does not abandon her theory, and instead refines it. Lena is apparently right: "it's easier for people to theorize about what's occurring."
- 14:13 Lena: I feel like I do... In thinking about what you're now saying about words and whatnot. When it comes to my own inner experiences of things or like if I'm hearing something or just purely trying to comprehend there's this visual representation. Um, I think it's when I sit in a certain mindset that the words decide to come out. Um, I don't know that, um, I've begun realizing that words might not be so much part of human, my human nature. Maybe it's just something that I've overlaid, I overlay on my experience at certain times. I mean, just seeing from what we've discovered so far. Um, and I am confident about my visual experiences. I really see those things in my head. [Alek: Um hm.] And, but it's hard for me to, um, I'm realizing it's difficult for me (and I don't know if this is something that

you experience in yourself, or you experience in yourself, or any of your other, um, participants experience) that pure, you know, unfiltered awareness of their inner experience without the overlaying of all the other junk that comes with being a person, y'know, like my past experiences play a part in how I experience things. And genetics and all these other factors and stuff. Does that...

14:13 RTH is finally about to answer the (approximate) question that Lena asked at about 9:27.

15:49 RTH: So this, this conversation, this piece of the conversation [inaudible] start with a question of, [Lena: Yes.] you were asking whether you could bracket or it's possible to bracket presuppositions or something like that. [Lena: Yes.] And the answer to that question is, I don't think it's possible to do that--well, I think it is possible actually to do it perfectly. I don't think we do it perfectly. I think Nirvana probably is being able to bracket presuppositions perfectly. [Lena: (quizzically) Nirvana? Nirvana?] yeah, like "enlightenment." [Lena: Oh, Okay.] True, true, [Lena: Thank you for clarifying.] True enlightenment [Lena: Yeah.] is probably the ability to see things as they absolutely are without, [Lena: Right.] without [Alek: Theories.] without theories or whatever. And I don't have any personal connection to people or to myself. I'm not claiming that I've arrived at enlightenment by any means. [Lena: Right right right.] The [pause]...

16:45 ...but what I, I think that short of enlightenment, I think there is a more or less version of that. And so I think people can get caught up in their own theories [Lena: Yeah.] and in a quite convincing way, [Lena: Yeah.](in convincing for themselves that this is the way it is. [Snaps fingers.] Absolutely no question about it). And if that doesn't comport with, sort, of reality, then I think that is some kind of a problem for them. What kind of a problem? I don't actually, know. But I think, so what I, maybe "problem" isn't the right word. I think there's some *value* as a general rule to have your theories comport with what's actually going on with you. So I think you have a theory, you had a theory of yourself as being verbal, which probably was not in line with your actual experience. What that does to Lena as a person. I don't really know, but it can't be good, it seems to me. [Lena: Well, I...] Or maybe it is good, maybe, maybe it's, maybe it's good. I don't actually know the answer to that.

17:44 AK: Or maybe it's good to know that you're a visual person when it seems like you were [inaudible]

Q: Does DES try to pierce the veil of delusion?

17:48 Lena: Well I see it as, I'm not disappointed that I'm not verbal or anything. But, um, [pause] what was I going to say? So in a sense, like from what I'm understanding (and tell me if I'm on the right path of knowing what this is here). In a way you're, this might sound a little weird, but like piercing through the veil of Maya, like the veils that we kind of put over ourselves in life that we get from experience or that we get from our environments or even genetics and we sort of uplift that delusion, sort of.

18:27 RTH: I think that's exactly, I think that's exactly right.

18:27 Lena: Okay. I could see though, for some people that, that it can be very scary. Because then you have to really reckon with like your true self, you know, your true nature.

18:37 AK: Um hm. Delusions are pesky. [Lena: Yeah.] I think another thing that you're kind of asking is something like, Can people do this? Or are, sort of like, are people good at this? Or, and I think [Lena: Yes.] that's why we do the whole beeper procedure. That's why we kind of give you like these optimal conditions, because we're not naturally good at it. And somebody asks like what kind of person are you, you're probably not likely to like freeze time, pay attention without presuppositions and apprehend your experience and then tell them. You're going to say, [simulates offhandedness] I think I'm pretty..., I got this internal monologue, or I have whatever. And where all that stuff comes from. I think we come by honestly, but I don't know through what filters we arrive at these theories. [Lena: Yeah.] . But then you, it seems like you almost need something like the beeper [Lena: Um hm.] and all of its structure and its precision about the moment of the beep and the opportunities to do these interviews again and again and build some skill before you can say, I think I'm kind of like this without all the theory about genetics and I don't know what all on top of it.

Q: Are you looking for enlightenment? Or are you just seeing what's there?

19:39 Lena: So in doing all this, and because I understand the objective, um, of, uh, the purpose of beeper and the purpose of this, I think, a little bit better, but I think I still have a little trouble understanding, um, your, what you're looking for. In terms of, are you looking for enlightenment? Are you looking for an enlightened person? Do you want to meet an enlightened person in this experience? Are you looking for your enlightenment for yourself in this? Or, or is it just completely, you're not looking for anything. You're just seeing what's out there. It's like you're just this beacon. Like you're sending out a signal or like, Hey, come check us out. Let's try to figure out some cool things about consciousness. I'm just wondering.

20:32 RTH: [Pause] I would be delighted to be enlightened. [Alek: Yeah, I agree. Awesome.] [inaudible] I would be delighted to find somebody who was enlightened. I'm not sure that I am capable of recognizing--you might be the enlightened person and [Lena: I wouldn't say that!] I wouldn't know it.

20:48 Lena: Maybe my brother though. I have to say he's an interesting feller. Maybe he'll do this with you guys. Yeah.

20:54 RTH: The, so I'm, I don't think it's fair to say that I'm in the pursuit of enlightenment. [Lena: Umm.] I think you're asking a good question and a fair question and a difficult question, but it's something, it's something like when I consider what I could do in the world, this seems like a good thing to do [Lena: yeah.] and, and I can't, I don't, I don't, it's hard for me to defend it any more than that.

Q: What is the driving force behind this study?

- 21:24 Lena: Oh, I don't want you to defend yourself. I just, I want, I guess, I just need to understand the driving force of this, you know, and what it means. And I personally think it's great. I think it's, this is a great project. Just that reason alone, being able to do something good, like bring consciousness to people's everyday experiences is a great thing and of itself. That's all it needs to really be. But...
- 21:46 AK: I think it's, at least for me, it's more basic than that. Like, I think it's great if you learn about your truth. [Lena: yeah.] But like I, you know, in as loving way as I could say, [laughs] I also don't really care. Like if a participant leaves and does, is not enlightened or is, doesn't find this therapeutic, [Lena: Right.] or it still seems really good to me. And maybe that's like it, it's just interesting. Or it's... So we go back and forth about like what, how can we articulate the value of this? [Lena: Yeah.] And I don't have the words yet, [Lena: Yeah.] but they're kind of like, the proof is in the pudding. Like I never leave this room after an hour of struggling with people. And sometimes like, Oh, like this, we're just can't even agree on the word for experience, you know? And it always feels worthwhile. [Lena: Um hm.] It never feels like a waste of time. And I think that...
- 22:37 RTH: It never feels dishonest.
- 22:40 AK: It never feels dishonest. And maybe 200 years from now we'll actually know or whatever about people. And then we'll be able to say, this is how it's useful. Or maybe 10, two years now, I dunno. But I sometimes think of us as like the gat., like we're like gathering the tomatoes or something. And somebody else is going to make the sauce. [Lena: inaudible] Maybe we're going to make the sauce, but, but it's good to gather the tomatoes.
- 23:03 Lena: Okay. I get that. And I respect that.
- 23:07 RTH: I, and I totally agree with all of that. And it really comes down to, we think, I think we think about what all the possibilities of that we could do. And this seems pretty good. And it, and, and y'know, part of it is that it's genuinely interesting, y'know, to contemplate wavy, wispy [Lena: Yeah.] back wispy visual backgrounds. While I don't think we've run across that, I can't say... [Lena: Very cool.] Indeterminant visual backgrounds is something which we see relatively frequently, that people, people like, I think you've talked about translucent skin and facial characteristics, or something like that, that's fairly frequent because people don't know about characteristics and they, so they make visualizations and leave out some details or whatever. That's garden variety visual experience from my point of view. [Lena: Yes.] The waviness is, is new and, and, and so part of it is the... It, it's like a crossword puzzle or something like that. For me, maybe for Alek, but it's a genuine puzzle. What is it that Lena means when she says, wavy / wispy? When she says wispy, what is it that she means by that word? [Lena: Um hm.]
- 24:29 Does she mean anything by that word? Is it just used, is it just sloppy? Or, or, or does she have something in particular in mind? And what's, what's that like about her experience? And then we'll try to figure that out. And then we'll try to figure out whether that was really believable? And whether, you know, am I rushing to conclusions about that? So it's a, it's an examination of what Lena meant and it's an examination of

what, whether Russ was too quick to go in that direction, or is he's holding, holding back or whatever. And it's, it is a, it's a massively intellectual undertaking. [Lena: Yes.] That doesn't seem quite a fair way to say it. But it involves all of the faculties that I've got (let's put it that way) to try to figure out whether this is a genuine understanding of what Lena is saying as best as she can about her and her experience, without sweeping any of that crap under the rug. [Lena: Yeah.] And that seems like a worthwhile thing to do.

Q: Does reducing the delusion cause anxiety or pain?

- 25:28 Lena: Yes. Yeah. No. To truly understand what somebody is saying, [Alek: Yeah.] that's a difficult thing. Just because you [inaudible] anything. But um, last question is, um, so my, I brought up the whole like piercing the veil of my and all that and kind of uplifting or lifting the myriad of different things that we use as a human being to cope with every, with our everyday experience of things, whether it be relying on a past experience or relying on a certain belief system that kind of creates how our experiences will be to us or how they will seem to us, which is the delusion. So we can't really see true reality or our own true nature. Or even that is part of our true nature is being delusional, I don't know. But in doing that [laughs] (I'm ranting a little bit), but in the veil of Maya or when you do that to deal with people like help them or kind of show them a little bit that, okay these are our preconceived ideas, these are our theories.
- 26:34 Now let's just like take that curtain off. Or in another way, let's put that blanket down. And it's like, it's like a comfort [Alek: Um hm.] a little bit to some of us I would say. Do you find that when kind of trying to remove that, that it causes anxiety for people? 'Cause you did say something like, "Could it be hurtful to me that I'm not this verbal person, I don't have this amazing inner dialogue. Maybe I'm not this like super talky, talky person inside and having this amazing intellectual conversation with myself." Like I don't, I don't feel disappointed, I feel, "Oh wow. Okay, that's cool. I'm visual." You know,
- 27:16 RTH: So, so it's a great question. [Lena: Okay.] And, and so, and it's a two-part answer. [Lena: Okay.] The first part of the answer is then people resist [Lena: Okay.] their having the, having the veil lifted.
- 27:30 Lena: Why do you think that is?
- 27:30 RTH: 'Cause they're delusions.[Lena: Oh!] [they laugh] People are connected to their delusions--that's what is as delusion. Some people resist that. So the bracketing of presuppositions is not an easy task. And, and, but I would also, I would also say it seems like there should be a risk to having a delusion removed, but I can't remember a single time (I'm doing this for 50 years) where, where I thought somebody walked out of here and said, "Geez, that was a mistake. I shouldn't, I shouldn't have done that." But that was, or that or that felt worse as the result of it. [Lena: Right.] And y'know, I think, I think people know what the truth is. And they... People value the truth. And if you can lift the, if you can genuinely lift the veil a little bit and let people see themselves as they really are, that is in my experience so far. And, and you know, I've got no reason to think

that tomorrow is going to be different. [Lena: Yeah.] But I can, I can honestly say I've never seen the [inaudible] be a bad deal.

28:49 And, and, and the, the, and the reason for that is, I think, because what we're, what we're discovering about you, your, your wispy images, is I think a genuine characteristic of your experience, [Lena: Um hm.] which is not what psychology in general does, y'know. Psychology gives you a test and it says, well here's your score on the test. And that score is definitely a misrepresentation of you. [Lena: Um hm.] And, and at its absolute best, it's a comparison between you and somebody else, and, and people, people are not necessarily... And, and, and, and in actuality it's a misrepresentation of you in very important ways 'cause those tests have limited validity.

29:35 The deal here is your wispy images is a pretty high-fidelity view of Lena. She's got wispy imagery. [Lena: Um hm [inaudible, laughs] And for whatever, whatever and advantageous.... We're not saying this is a good thing to have wispy imagery or a bad thing to have wispy imagery. But we are saying it looks like that's what, what Lena is. [Lena: Okay.] And we're actually even being honest about that. We're saying, well, y'know we both, we've only, we've got 12 experiences (or whatever it is) and three or four of them had wispy images in it. So it looks like that's a common thing. But maybe we were just unlucky and got these [inaudible] and if we did another 24 images, we'd never seen any of them again. All of that stuff is, is part of the honest description. [Lena: Yeah.] And my experience has been that, that people are happy to encounter their own actual inner experience when it's really their own actual their experience. And it's not, it's not, well, my favorite thing is wispy images and I'm going to force you to have wish be images and uh, which is I think what would a lot of psychology [Lena: inaudible.] has [inaudible] a lot of, a lot of interpersonal reactions.

Q: Are there people who experience true reality?

30:43 Lena: Right. Yeah. And do you, so I kind of have two short questions now. Um. So do you think that there, well, the first one is question is actually, um, okay, I lost that question, but I'll ask you the other one. Do you think that there are people who can experience or have you learned that people in your experiments, um, that people, there are people out there who can have a true idea of their experience? They're, they have the closest experience of true reality in terms of this experiment? Have you met anyone that can really experience reality in a truthful way, versus laying over those things? Or is it, or is it moreso you teaching people how to bracket those theories that we develop?

31:36 RTH: So I, I, I, the answer to your question, the honest answer your questions, I don't know the answer to that question. I have sampled with a few people who teach enlightenment skills. And it's hard to know exactly, you know, [Lena: Yes.] I'm not the kind of a guy who can say, 'Wow, this person's enlightened and that one's, that one's not.' [Lena: Um hm.] Um, so, we, this study is not about the connection between experience and reality. [Lena: Um hm.] I think reality is more complicated than anybody and any experience. You, at the moment that you're having a pretty complex experience that involves a wavy, wavy [Alek: Wavy guy touching microphones.] guy touching microphones, and the residual of being pissed at your husband for not turning the lights, the windshield wipers off, or whatever. There were, there were an infinite (almost)

number of other things that could have been going on at that, at that time. The temperature in the room or the feel of the car's seat on your backside, or y'know, we could list and list and list and list and list. For whatever reason, genetic, experiential, or whatever, you were interested in microphone stuff in the way that you were interested in microphone phone stuff; and you were interested in the residual of a windshield wiper, or whatever. [Lena: Um hm.] It's not given to me (or to us, I think) to judge whether that's a good thing or a bad thing. It, it's about whether it is a thing, and that's where, that's what we're about.

33:19 Lena: Okay. So it's more looking at what's most important or prominent for that person in their experience.

33:27 RTH: Right. Exactly. [Lena: Um hm.] And nothing more than that, really.

33:30 Lena: Right. Okay. And that is different for every person.

33:33 AK: It is.

33:34 RTH: That's right. And different for you, y'know, from one from time to the next. You've got some characteristics, maybe visual, visual stuff, but any other, we are...

Q: Should we be treating people more as individuals?

33:43 Lena: Do you think it would go? It would be... Oh! This was my other question. 'Cause you said that in psychology you need to get a test, you get a score, and then they compare that score to others. And then that's how they come up with all their stats and this and that and the other. Do you think that, um, in doing what you do, that treating people as a collective number is accurate? Or do you think that it's more we should be treating people more as individuals and not putting them in the terms of a bell curve? Like this is normal, this is not normal and this is here and this is there.

34:25 RTH: So if I knew the answer to that question, I'd be a really smart guy. [Lena:(laughs).] The uh I think there is some fundamental risk of objectifying people and being fundamentally comparative about people. [Lena: Um hm.] [Alek: Um hm.] I, I, I worry, I guess you would say, I worry about what that does to people. [Lena: Right.] But I'm, I'm not enlightened. I mean, I don't know the truth with a capital T. Maybe that is absolutely, maybe psy..., maybe 2020 psychology is absolutely the pinnacle of human consciousness and always will be. That doesn't seem like that to me, but I'm not in a position to know the answer to that.

35:23 Lena: So, and I know you may not know the answer to the, we couldn't know because you weren't born in 1800s, but... Would you say that people from the past and you can really get to as far back as you can remember when you were growing up or as far back as, y'know, what you've learned from history. Would you say that people from back then till now there has been any shift in consciousness? Like, y'know, there was the enlightenment era, and there was like that whole boom of new thinking. And then there was, y'know, the, um, Einstein days and you felt like scientists were coming out with all

kinds of crazy stuff. And now we're kind of just in this weird place where it's like, there's not really one person that is doing anything like that. I mean, I guess Tesla, like he's got a bunch of geniuses working for him and he's kind of the financier. But is he the Einstein of our days? I don't think so. But I don't know him personally, so I couldn't say. So do you feel that there is a conscious consciousness evolution that happens in humanity? Or do you think we're rather than evolving, do you think we're devolving?

36:33 RTH: I don't know the answer to that. [Lena: Okay. I don't either.] I think it would have been totally interesting for me, you know, for us, for the world to have done this kind of study, [Lena: yeah.] big time but well, in 2005 before the iPhone. And now everybody says that, y'know, we're fractionated or whatever. And then do that experiment, do that study again. Well, that would have been interesting. [Alek: Yeah.]

Q: Has the iPhone altered our ability to be conscious?

37:04 Lena: How do you feel the iPhone has...

37:05 RTH: I don't know the answer to that.

37:05 Lena: Alright. But at least, you do, you do know it's done something to our ability to, of our, of our consciousness, our ability to be conscious.

37:16 RTH: I don't know. I know, I know we've, we've, we see a lot of people who are scrolling.

37:20 AK: We see a lot of scrolling.

37:22 RTH: So whatever scrolling is...

37:25 AK: Which I don't think we really understand. [Lena: So like inaudible.] And, it doesn't seem like much, I'll tell you that. Like it doesn't seem like a, but it lacks the richness (without being judgmental or whatever) of like the inner seeing that you're engaged in. It's a lot less, less than that. [Lena: Um hm (inaudible).]

37:45 RTH: But whether that's good or bad [shrugs].

37:45 AK: Right. We don't know, but it's just doesn't have a lot of experiential oomph qualities, [Lena: yeah.] whatever.

37:56 Lena: So would you say that in a lot of your DES experiments that in the people that you do it with, a lot of their beeps are interrupting their scrolling? Is that what you mean? [RTH: We've got, Yes.] Okay. That's [inaudible]

38:07 AK: Yeah. Like a good chunk.

38:10 RTH: A pretty big chunk. And more, recently.

- 38:13 Lena: Are you guys scrollers? [To RTH] Like do you scroll? [To Alek] Or do you scroll on Facebook or...?
- 38:17 AK: Of course. [RTH: I don't.] I'm trying to quit. [all laugh].
- 38:22 Lena: Me, too. It's hard, but I got three kids so at least I'm [inaudible].
- 38:24 AK: It could be that when they're wearing the beeper [Lena: Yeah.] they [inaudible] but, I mean, we're catching at like such a high percentage that it's certainly more than just when people, [Lena: Yeah.] Like people are doing this a lot, and it is grabbing their experience in a way that the experience is of scrolling. Not of visualizing or imagining you're saying or... It's like scrolling is it. [Lena: Yeah.] And what that means experientially is still kind of nebulous to me, but it's a thing.
- 38:47 Lena: Or what is it, what does the internet mean to our experience? Like, I mean, I know when I'm scrolling and I'm (this is just a theory) that when I am scrolling, there's, it's a mental experience, a mental emotional experience. And that's enough sometimes for me. It's like, Oh, I'm done, I'm going to bed, you know, reading all kinds of crazy stuff, people's weird conversations and, y'know, memes and points of view.
- 39:15 RTH: From what, I would say from my impression of the scrolling is for most people, most of the time it's a pretty mindless thing.
- 39:19 AK: Right. They're not really engaged with what they're reading.
- 39:21 Lena: Oh! They're just distracting, [inaudible]
- 39:23 AK: Yeah. Right. It's less than reading, less than having an emotion, I guess. Less, you know, I don't mean that in a, [Lena: I hear you.] but if it doesn't have that [inaudible] involved [inaudible].

Q: About inauthenticity.

- 39:31 Lena: Well, okay. Last thing, I don't know if you do it. In my philosophy class, we are learning of that philosopher, Heidegger, and his three fundamental ontological aspects of Dasein, which means to, or to be, or the being. And the last one out of the three, one, the last one is victimization. And that type of state of being is the person who is constantly escaping their reality, um, and distracting themselves, which then puts them in a place of living inauthentically. So would you say that the scrollers are living inauthentically? Or is that hard to judge? 'Cause you don't want to judge necessarily, because then it kind of skews the process of dealing with this sort of experiment?
- 40:29 RTH: I don't want to make a judgment about the, [Lena: yeah.] about the scrollers and inauthenticity. What I would say is that delusions block authenticity. And presuppositions are delusions, which means presuppositions block authenticity. Which means in your case that your view of yourself as a verbal person [Lena: Um hm.] is in some degree inauthentic, I think. [Lena: Yes.] [Alek: Right.] Whether that's exactly what

Heidegger meant by inauthenticity, that would be a harder question for me to answer. [Lena: Um hm.] But the, but (and we're circling back to one of your earlier questions), it seems to be that it's sort of of value to be authentic to yourself, which is what the "Know thyself" deal is.

41:26 Lena: Well, then that's what, too, some of these people that you, we talk about in terms of the scrolling and the whole cell phone thing. Like we all do it. Of course I'm mindless in that myself. That the only... One of the reasons why I personally would scroll is to distract themselves from, from their environment. Or if it's not to distract themselves, it becomes the distraction. Or it becomes... The distraction is their experience. And um, [Alek: Sure.] so I'm wondering if there is in some way the delusion that we experience in every, in our lives with our different perceptions of life, if in a way that we are distracting ourselves from the delusion that we live in. [RTH: Okay, but it's.] And that it's hard.

42:19 AK: I mean, we are just describers [inaudible]. [Lena: Yeah.] That's what [inaudible]. I don't know.

42:24 RTH: I w, I would, I will take this step in the direction of that question, and that is: I think that the inner experience and external experience are skills that you learn and practice and whatever. [Lena: Um hm.] So your visual skill involves wispy whatever, and that may have something to do with some gene on some chromosome or whatever. But it's whatever, for whatever reason, it's something that you have figured out how to do. [Lena: Yeah.] And scrolling is a skill, [Lena: Yes.] and people do those skills for whatever reason that that they do those skills. But it's not our job to judge that.

42:59 AK: Sorry, I've gotta go.

[Session ends.]