Do people silently speak to themselves most of the time? What goes on in the inner experience of women with bulimia nervosa just before they purge? If you task a participant in an fMRI scanner to innerly speak, is that the same phenomenon as when he spontaneously innerly speaks? Is it possible (or frequent) to think without experiencing words, visual images, or any other symbols? How is the visual imagery of a 12-, and 22-, and a 72-year-old similar and different? How do feelings differ from one person to another? Such questions would seem to be important to psychology, neuroscience, poetry, art, and the human condition in general, yet they draw almost no study. This talk presents my work on inner experience and the method I have developed to study it.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas psychologist Russ Hurlburt is widely regarded as perhaps Western science’s leading expert in the exploration of naturally occurring, spontaneous inner experience. In this talk he will describe the methodological perils that surround such research and the ways they can perhaps be mitigated.