

The Making of an Astronaut

Voice-over 1:

Lift-off is a breathtaking sight. It's the expression of man's audacity and determination to transform dreams into reality. But it's also terrifying. An astronaut remains human...vulnerable but in control of his own free will.

Voice-over 2:

I remember well: I'd been called up in 1985/1986 just before the Challenger disaster. I was watching television when it happened and I was supposed to say 'Yes' or 'No'. We're very aware of the risks and we accept them. It's a dangerous job. Of course, both the Russians and the Americans had accidents. It will happen again. You can't have exploration without paying a certain price. Death is sad, but it's the price you have to pay to be able to make man progress.

Voice-over 1:

It's an exciting job for those directly involved in the action. For friends and family though it is not always easy. There are long periods of separation due to training, and the worry before and during space flights. Psychological stability is an important selection criteria and plays a large part in training.

Voice-over 2:

There are two main points to the psychological aspect: self-care, meaning knowing how to keep yourself fit in mind and body when you're apart from friends, family or children, or Earth, everything you're used to...

Voice-over 2:

And then there's teamwork. That's extremely important because conflict can happen anywhere; on the job or away from it. You need to know how to resolve problems between several people. It's different when it's two people to when it's three, or to five or to six people. In each case there's a different problem to sort out.

Voice-over 1:

A healthy mind in a healthy body is important, but so is a sharp mind that's willing to learn and a calm temperament. The successful candidate will have a lot on his plate.

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