mine is an interesting story Ron McNair

the late great dr. Ron McNair who became a friend of mine many years ago and unfortunately was killed on the Challenger accident was my inspiration for becoming an astronaut I never dreamed of being one until I met him when I was a test pilot he challenged me to apply for the Space Shuttle cpe so that's how I happened to apply and that's how I happened to be here you know I think if anything flying in space changed my perspective on our planet I was always one that had been raised in a
family that was relatively religious and

and studious if you will but just having

the opportunity to view the planet from

from the perspective of space really

change the way I looked at the planet

on which we live

you always remember two things you

always remember your last flight and

your first flight and I would have to go

back to just after main engine cutoff on

my very first flight on sts 61c aboard

Columbia when we back then you didn't

roll up right so you were still upside

down when you got to orbit and I
remember raising my seat looking out
seeing the British Isles go by and then
this huge island that turned out to be
the continent of Africa I have done a
lot of study on the geography of Africa
to try to prepare myself because I knew
my folks had come from that from that
continent in some countries down there
so I knew where all the countries when I
looked out and it was just huge Sahara
Desert then the Midland part the
equatorial region of Africa and no lines
down here at all no countries no
anything i was just wiped out and I was

overcome with emotion one and looking at

00:02:02,340 --> 00:02:09,250
at Africa you know my home country or my

00:02:06,789 --> 00:02:10,868
home continent if you will just overcome

00:02:09,250 --> 00:02:15,818
with emotion and I just remember tears

00:02:10,868 --> 00:02:18,039
coming down my face and I think the

00:02:15,818 --> 00:02:20,548
among the lessons that I try to employ

00:02:18,039 --> 00:02:23,108
are those that have to do with people I

00:02:20,549 --> 00:02:25,450
talked to people quite a bit about one

00:02:23,109 --> 00:02:26,980
of my most memorable experiences in my

00:02:25,449 --> 00:02:30,039
time in the astronaut office being the

00:02:26,979 --> 00:02:31,659
the two-year period of time in which I

00:02:30,039 --> 00:02:33,939
was involved in training for my last

00:02:31,659 --> 00:02:36,150
flight sts 60 when I actually had an

00:02:33,939 --> 00:02:38,949
opportunity to meet and serve with

00:02:36,150 --> 00:02:40,989
Sergei krikalev and vladimir t talk two
russian cosmonauts former soviet cosmonauts who came to the united states with their families and lived in houston with us for a little bit more than two years and it was during that period of time that we got to know each other our families got to know each other very well and I got what I always knew very well and I got what I always knew you know an appreciation for this for the human spirit the fact that though we may be different for a lot of different reasons whether it's national origin or ethnic or whatever that essentially were all
the same when we focus on a similar mission