obviously we get that question a fair amount for me it was kind of a logical progression I think at a very early age I loved airplanes and kind of went after that goal to some degree and it just seemed to be a natural progression as you as you fly airplanes you want to fly the next biggest experimental you know high-flying fastest vehicle and and you know the show is that and it's probably going to be for a long time as far as you know anything comparatively speaking so it was just a great opportunity and and I worked hard obviously but you know
had a little luck in ball two and it's
just a it's a great privilege to be able
to fly it
there are a number of them and
and some of them are fairly emotional
you know all the time and effort to get
to that point when you first get into
space you know just all the things that
that led you there so those first few
moments where you experience you know
microgravity that was definitely one one
very strong memory and I think you know
just that first time that you got the
gaze out of window either on the space
station or on the Space Shuttle just to

look back at Earth it's just

unbelievable the view that you have the

biggest challenge for me

I think getting through the Columbia

I think was probably the

biggest for me one because I I was the

the lead astronaut that strapped in the

crew so I worked with them quite a bit

before the mission and then you know

just dealing with the aftermath that was

probably for me personally was the

biggest challenge it was obviously it

was hard on the entire country and on

was
the astronaut corps but to lose seven
people you know that you're close to and
then it kind of makes you you know dig
deep and look down inside yourself and
and and ask ask if you if this is
really what you want to do and if it's
worth it and if it's the right thing and
you know I was convinced it was
I think the biggest surprise for me is
the adjustment that you have to make
from living on earth to living in space
and being there for a number of days and
then coming back you know you're
laying on your back on the pad thinking
you're probably not going to go because
there's gonna be a weather issue and you come out of the 9 minute hold and 17 minutes later you're in space and just adjusting your psyche to that is it's a lot harder than you think and then you come back from a mission you land and two days later you're mowing your lawn and it's just almost I hate to use the word but it is surreal and when you think back on a mission it's almost like it was a dream and it's you kind of have to ask yourself was that really me did I really do that was I really there because it is
so much different than the rest of you

know your life and and so much removed

from it but it's just so rewarding and

exciting and tiring it's a lot of hard

work but just just a tremendous

experience that you just never never

going to forget I'm thankful that they

take a lot of pictures and a lot of

videos so that you can look back at it

because you kind of have to get yeah you

have to look at that stuff every now and

again just to to convince yourself that

you actually did do it