



1  
00:00:00,810 --> 00:00:20,690  
Music.

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00:00:20,690 --> 00:00:26,230  
SLATE: When did you decide to become an astronaut?

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00:00:26,230 --> 00:00:29,480  
SWANSON: I didn't decide to become an astronaut until after I finished up my master's.

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00:00:29,480 --> 00:00:33,170  
I always liked engineering and I knew I wanted to work in that field and

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00:00:33,170 --> 00:00:37,460  
I got a degree in engineering as an undergraduate then went on and got a degree in computer science.

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00:00:37,460 --> 00:00:42,650  
When I got out of that, though, I realized, 'I probably need to get a job at some point,'

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00:00:42,650 --> 00:00:44,670  
the goal of going to school.

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00:00:44,670 --> 00:00:47,340  
And I started to think about what I really wanted to do at that point, you know,

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00:00:47,340 --> 00:00:54,560  
specifically in engineering and in that area and somehow the astronaut thing popped up in my head.

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00:00:54,560 --> 00:00:57,530  
Though I don't know exactly what it was that made it go in there.

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00:00:57,530 --> 00:01:01,890  
And 11 years later I finally made it. It was definitely well worth it, though.

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00:01:01,890 --> 00:01:07,010  
SLATE: How did your life change when you became an astronaut?

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00:01:07,010 --> 00:01:13,100

SWANSON: Not a whole heck of a lot. I was working at JSC already in the aircraft operations department.

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00:01:13,100 --> 00:01:18,840

So I didn't have to move houses, I didn't have to do much else, I just changed over jobs.

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00:01:18,840 --> 00:01:21,490

I mean, yes, my day-to-day job changed quite a bit.

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00:01:21,490 --> 00:01:24,860

I now work, I'm going back to school, basically a year or two years'

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00:01:24,860 --> 00:01:28,320

worth of basic training between the shuttle and the station,

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00:01:28,320 --> 00:01:30,360

so that's what you go back and you start studying again.

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00:01:30,360 --> 00:01:35,590

But besides that, family life didn't change a bit, nothing else really changed.

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00:01:35,590 --> 00:01:40,860

SLATE: How is the view different between the shuttle and during a spacewalk?

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00:01:40,860 --> 00:01:43,500

SWANSON: You feel more protected, I believe, inside the spaceship.

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00:01:43,500 --> 00:01:50,860

In the window, of course, you don't get a full view. More of a 360 degree view you get in a spacesuit.

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00:01:50,860 --> 00:01:54,180

Of course, I haven't been up since the cupola's been there, that's a different story,

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00:01:54,180 --> 00:01:55,780

I'd like to find out how that is.

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00:01:55,780 --> 00:01:59,220

But it's definitely a different view.

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00:01:59,220 --> 00:02:02,340

It's a great view, though, from the shuttle itself and from station windows.

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00:02:02,340 --> 00:02:05,020

It's fantastic, you can sit there and look out for hours.

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00:02:05,020 --> 00:02:09,620

But it's just, add another whole layer to it when you do it in a spacesuit and,

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00:02:09,620 --> 00:02:12,920

you know, you're in your own little space vehicle and you've got this great view

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00:02:12,920 --> 00:02:19,880

and you can look from horizon to horizon without much effort and it's just you out in space.

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00:02:19,880 --> 00:02:21,900

It's kind of a very interesting feeling.

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00:02:21,900 --> 00:02:25,770

A myriad of feelings come onto you at a time, you know? One,

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00:02:25,770 --> 00:02:28,400

you have to get your job done, so you really have to concentrate on that, too.

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00:02:28,400 --> 00:02:32,650

But then you look down and you see this beautiful Earth and that's a little overwhelming in itself and you realize

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00:02:32,650 --> 00:02:35,550

'I'm in a vacuum, too,' which is a little dangerous, you know,

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00:02:35,550 --> 00:02:37,860

so there's many feelings going on at the same time.

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00:02:37,860 --> 00:02:40,860

But the one that overrides all the others, of course, is get the job done,

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00:02:40,860 --> 00:02:42,610

because you don't want to screw up.

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00:02:42,610 --> 00:02:48,180

SLATE: What was your biggest surprise in space?

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00:02:48,180 --> 00:02:52,880

SWANSON: Everybody tells you how great it is to go to space and then when you get there it's even better.

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00:02:52,880 --> 00:02:56,870

I think that's it, how much better it is than people say because you never really believe them all.

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00:02:56,870 --> 00:03:00,710

You say, 'Yeah, you're just saying that just cause it's great to go and all that,'

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00:03:00,710 --> 00:03:04,730

and it is great to go. You think, 'Yeah.' When you get there, to me it was just so much fun,