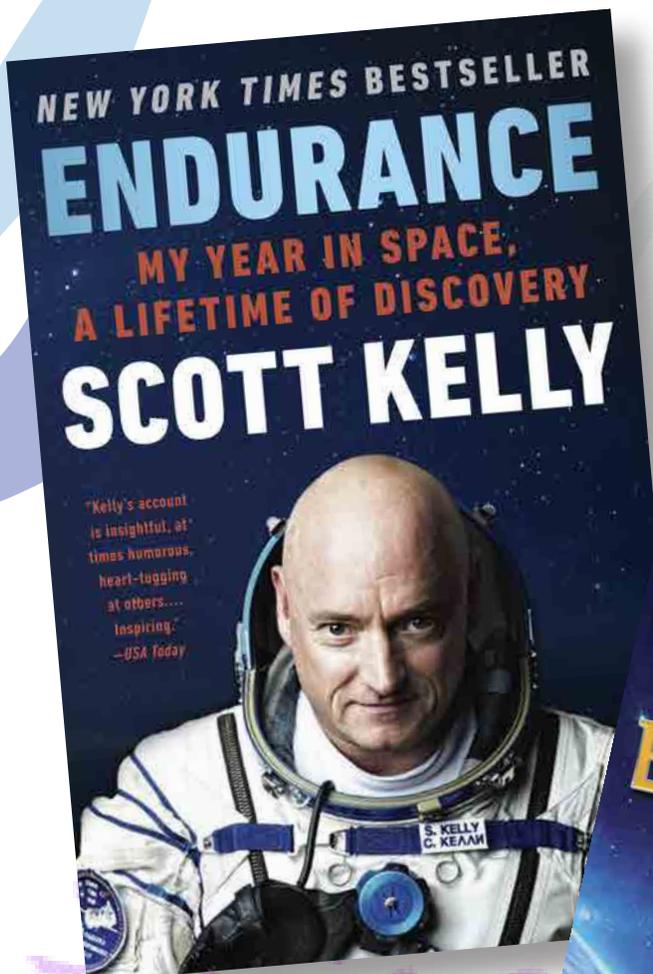


Brightly

FAMILY BOOK CLUB



ESSENTIAL THEMES

Consider and discuss central ideas present in astronaut Scott Kelly's memoir.

SCHOLARSHIP: An underachieving student, Kelly made a total transformation in college after he came across Tom Wolfe's book, *The Right Stuff*, and found something in it that he could really relate to. *Where can you look for motivation? What role does motivation play in getting a good education?*

PERSEVERANCE: Kelly struggled to find what he was passionate about, but once he did, he moved toward his goals with drive and determination. *How do you fuel a never-quit attitude?*

FAMILY: Kelly had good examples of focus and determination in his mother and his twin brother. *How does family impact the paths you choose?*

ISOLATION: Though Kelly was never completely alone on the space station, he missed his family and being able to go outdoors in nature. Though he is sometimes sad or frustrated, he is always busy and finds ways to entertain himself. *How do you handle situations where you feel isolated or lonely?*

RISK: Kelly is positive about risk—from the risky activities he and his brother engaged in as children to having risk at the core of his career. *What does risk-taking make possible? How do you balance risk and reward?*

CHALLENGES: Kelly likes things that are hard to do because to him, that makes them worth doing. He finds working at something that is challenging to be very rewarding. *Why should you challenge yourself? How do you feel about taking on new challenges?*

TEAMWORK: In Kelly's NASA career, he's found that the best way to meet the challenges of this life-threatening work is with teamwork. He's seen that when people work together in cooperation, anything can get done. *What are things you do that require cooperation or teamwork? Do you like working together with other people?*

SPACE: Kelly spent a year living and working in space aboard the International Space Station. *Why would humans want to live and work in space? What can we learn from living in space?*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use the following questions for book club conversations.

PART 1: LEARNING TO FLY

1. Growing up, what kind of relationship did Scott have with his twin brother Mark?
2. What did Scott learn from his mother's efforts to become a police officer?
3. How did Scott's father Richard Kelly's alcoholism affect the whole Kelly family?
4. Scott and his brother Mark "both thought trying something hard was the only way to live" and they took a lot of crazy risks in their childhood. What kinds of things did they do? Why do some people take more risks than others?
5. Why does Scott think that he probably would have been diagnosed with ADHD when he was a kid?
6. Why do you think Scott decides to go to college even though he realizes that he is not a good student?
7. When Scott was struggling during his first year of college, what provided him with inspiration to change direction?
8. After reading *The Right Stuff* by Tom Wolfe and deciding to try to become a naval aviator, what kind of effort did Scott make in his schoolwork?
9. How have books or a particular book shaped your life? Do you think there is a book out there for you that could change how you live or shape the meaning or purpose of your life?
10. How did Scott begin to put his plans in action, and what did his brother Mark do to help keep him on course?
11. Under military discipline at SUNY Maritime and the Navy ROTC, Scott began to understand that in order to apply himself, he needed a clear challenge. How does learning how to follow orders help Scott toward meeting his goals?
12. What was Scott's reaction to the explosion of the shuttle Challenger? Were you surprised by how he thought about it?
13. What kind of training did Scott get in flight school in Pensacola?
14. Scott made a mistake with the landing gear on his first solo flight and shares a saying about mistakes: "There are those who have and those who will." What does this saying mean? Did Scott learn from his mistake? Do you find it hard to learn from a mistake?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

15. Why was dogfighting one of Scott's favorite parts of his jet training?

16. Why is precision so important in flying and how did Scott learn that lesson?

17. How do Scott and his brother Mark become classmates? Why is this surprising to Scott?

18. How does Scott's circle of friends and family grow after he returns from the Persian Gulf?

19. How does Scott react when he learns his brother Mark has been called in for an astronaut interview?

20. Besides an interview with a group of 20 people, what else was part of the astronaut selection process? How long did this take? What helped Scott prepare for the entire process?

21. If you were interviewing to become an astronaut and were asked about your childhood, what would you share about your experiences and the challenges you faced?

PART 2: SPACE

22. What do you have to do to be considered a full-fledged astronaut? What was astronaut training like for Scott and the others in his class? What do you imagine has changed about astronaut training since the astronaut class of 1996?

23. What were the causes of the many delays of the launch of STS-103? What parts of Scott's training and experience may have helped him deal with this frustration?

24. At the T-minus nine hold, Scott thought, *Boy, this is a really dumb thing to be doing*, but says that he was not scared. Do you think he was scared? Given the risks, would you be scared? How is being concerned for your safety different from being scared?

25. Scott was the rookie on the STS-103 mission. What are some of the things he had to learn while living on *Discovery*? How did the other astronauts treat him? How would you feel about being pranked in space?

26. What does Scott think of Russia? Where do you think Russians got their ideas about how Americans live?

27. Scott describes winter survival training and water survival training in Russia as a "team-building exercise in dealing with shared hardship." Why do you think team building is important?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

28. How did the *Columbia* accident affect Scott personally? What effects did this disaster have on the shuttle program and future missions?

29. How was command of STS-118 a new challenge for Scott? What do you feel are the qualities of a good leader?

30. What was concerning about the return of *Endeavor* to Earth? What did you think of Scott's approach to dealing with the situation?

31. Were you surprised that Scott expressed his fears about his health when he learns he has a type of fast-growing cancer? Why do you think Scott doesn't mention talking about his illness with his daughters or the involvement of his family in his recovery?

32. How does Scott explain how Russian space training compares to NASA training? Why would there be agency differences in training for space travel? How is the Soyuz launch experience different from the shuttle?

33. When the Year in Space mission was announced, Scott wasn't sure he wanted to spend that long in space. Why did he decide to try for the opportunity? Would you want to spend a year in space? What would you be giving up if you did?

PART 3: MY YEAR IN SPACE

34. Do you notice any difference in how Part 3 of *Endurance* is written? How do the details given for this preparation and launch compare to other mission launches described in the book?

35. Scott is about to spend a year in space—something no one has before. How do you think he feels? How would you mentally prepare to be away from your planet, home, and family?

36. What tradition did Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin begin that Scott participates in before the launch of his Year in Space mission? What did Scott think about this tradition? What do you think about it and the other traditions of cosmonauts and astronauts? What traditions or rituals do you have before a big event or activity?

37. How do daily work and life activities on the ISS compare to what you may have seen in science fiction movies about space travel? What are you most surprised by?

38. Friday night group dinner is something everyone seems to look forward to. Do you have regular gatherings of family or friends that you look forward to? How does having something to look forward to affect your mood?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

39. When the SpaceX rocket explodes during launch, ISS loses another resupply vehicle. What does this mean for the ISS crew? What does Scott see as the lesson to learn from this loss?

40. Why is it so important to exercise in space? What is the importance of exercise when you are confined, both for your body and your mind? How does Scott make time for exercise? What motivates you to exercise?

41. What approach to command does Scott take as he takes the role of ISS commander?

42. How does Scott feel about his first spacewalk? Why did he not have the chance to do a spacewalk before?

43. Scott talks about voting from space. Why do you think he mentions this? Why is it important to vote no matter what the circumstances?

44. Why is it important for Scott to admit the mistake he made working on the CETA cart? How does admitting mistakes help solve problems?

45. Scott has spent Christmas in space three times. He reads from his Shackleton book about the expedition's Christmas in 1914. What does it mean to "have been tested and found not wanting"? How does this apply to Scott?

46. As he did on his arrival in space, Scott notes the smells of Earth. Why do you think he draws attention to what he smells? What goes through your mind when you notice a new smell?

