

It's a Question of Space: An Ordinary Astronaut's Answers to Sometimes Extraordinary Questions

Clayton C. Anderson

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A thirty-year NASA veteran, Clayton Anderson can list myriad impressive accomplishments: two missions to the International Space Station, six space walks, and the underdog story of becoming an astronaut after being rejected fifteen times. Anderson has shared his experiences online, in a 2015 memoir, and now in his enjoyable new book, *It's a Question of Space*.

The book reprints questions that were originally posed to Anderson online, with his answers printed nearly verbatim. A likeable narrator, Anderson is genuine in his willingness to share his insights. He freely admits what he doesn't know, as well as instances where his personal experiences might differ from the norm. The book is full of memorable anecdotes enlivened by a casual and welcoming conversational tone.

Many of the questions focus on daily life in space or on the space station. Anderson explains the differences between American and Russian astronaut food, the workout routines astronauts undertake to maintain their strength, and the complicated mechanics of how to go to the restroom in space and what happens to the aftermath. He includes fun photos of himself blowing bubbles or turning upside down, as well as some of his pictures of Earth taken from space.

Serious subjects are approached with the same candor. Anderson details the procedures for responding to a fire on the space station, considers the impact of geopolitics on the future of space exploration, and shares his heartbreaking experiences of being on the ground awaiting friends on the Columbia space shuttle and learning they wouldn't be returning.

Covering an impressive amount of material, *A Question of Space* is an engaging read for those fascinated by the history of the space program.

JEFF FLEISCHER (University Press 2018)

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