

S01 - E49 - Rooted & Unwavering - Hylke Faber & Nicole Stott

Presenter 00:01

Music. Welcome to rooted and unwavering, a podcast and radio show which features leaders from all walks of life in conversations about courageous connectedness. How do we stay connected to our best selves, especially when we are challenged to our own and others brightness, also when we don't feel it. Join host Hylke fauber, transformational coach, facilitator and award winning author of taming your crocodiles and his guests as they explore leadership greatness in today's episode of rooted and unwavering

Hylke Faber 00:40

Welcome back to Ruth and unwavering, we are broadcasting live today from Phoenix, from Florida and behind the scenes, also from Thailand, where we help people and leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. This is episode 49 I'm your host, hylka Faber, and I'm really grateful to be here today with Nico Stott, who is an equinox, an astronaut, a mom, an artist, and many other things as well that we'll learn about. Nico, how are you today? I am doing very well. Hylka, thank you for inviting me to speak with you. You are very welcome. It's it's an honor, and it feels very fitting to sit here with you in this week, which has been so important, I think, in many people's lives following elections, talking about how we can be the greatest crew members on this planet, which is a phrase that I learned from you. I'm going to talk a little bit about Nico in a moment to introduce her properly. And before I do that, I always start this podcast with a brief reflection of why we're doing this, why we're talking about rooted and wavering. And if this week was any example of that, it's so easy to fall back in places where we are not rooted and wavering, where we're disconnecting, where we're polarized, where we fall back into brain patterns, mental ideas that divide us, that don't feel good, that don't make progress, that are about you'd say, very primitive thinking. I noticed this in myself when I watched the election results come in, my reptilian brain was doing a number on me, and then I was grateful for this practice, or this orientation, of what I call connectedness quotient, where we integrate the wisdom of connecting deeply to ourselves, to others and our purpose here, like What's really going on? What is this really about? There's an inner quiet that comes. There's wisdom that comes, and that is what this podcast is about. To sit with leaders from all walks of life, to hear their stories, so we can be inspired to take our seat, to take our seat when our brain wants to run around and and do a number on us and others, that doesn't help anybody. So Nico stop is with us today. She is one of those people that I like to sit at the feet of. She is an astronaut, equina artist and author of this beautiful book called back to Earth, what life and space taught me about our home planet and our mission to protect it, and most importantly, she says he's a mom, she creatively combines the awe and wonder of her space flight experiences with her artwork to inspire everyone's appreciation of our role as crewmates here on spaceship Earth. She is a veteran NASA astronaut. She's been on two space flights, and has been living and working in space for



104 days. I just want you to feel 104 days. That's more than three months on both the International Space Station and the space shuttle. Some highlights included performing a space walks. It was a 10th woman to do so, flying the robotic arm to capture the first HDV. She'll explain a moment what that is, working with an international crew in support of the multidisciplinary science onboard the orbiting laboratory painting, a watercolor that's now in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, of course, a life changing view of looking at our home planet from space. She's also a NASA aquanaut, which means that she went deep underwater in preparation for space flight. She was part of what's called the NEMO nine. Yeah, this is not a joke. This is the name of this underwater laboratory that's called of the Aquarius laboratory, where she was for 18 days in a set. Ration dive mission, she stands for an international model of peaceful and successful cooperation that she has experienced in the extreme environments of space and sea, and she believes that this holds the key for the same kind of peaceful and successful collaboration that we can have as humanity here on Earth. The last time she was in space was in the early like the 2011 she will correct me in a moment, I think, on her in on her post NASA mission, she is a co founder of the space for Art Foundation, uniting a planetary community of children through awe and wonder of space exploration and the healing power of art. When I first met Nico a couple of months ago, I was very struck by how normal of a person's and now there's this astronaut which has been on so many TV shows and has done something that most people 99.9999999% of humans never get to do. There she is. You're humble with a deep sense of service. So, Nico, welcome. Welcome. So wow,

Nicole Stott 06:18

thank you. I love that though, you know, one of the greatest compliments I can get is and, and I my colleagues feel the same way. It's when somebody said, Oh, you're just so down to earth. You know, I expect, you know, it's like, no, what's expected. But it's, it's really a nice, a nice thing to say, because I think, you know, we're just human beings that get to do something that's just a little bit different.

Hylke Faber 06:44

Yes, yes. What a gift that is, to be able to share it and make it accessible to all of us. So tell us about connectedness. What have you learned about connectedness in your life and leadership? Tell us about that I can't wait to hear.

Nicole Stott 07:02

Your can't wait to hear. Oh, well, I think you know across the board for sure. You know, you know, connection, connectedness to me really has to do with relationships, with respect, with something that we call in the astronaut world, and another, you know, operational environment, situational awareness, like, not just being like in to yourself, but really aware of the environment, what's going on with the people and the place and, you know, everything else around you. I think that allows us to connect in a very positive way. And, you know, being having had the opportunity to be in space where you're, you know, above the Earth, where you have this really extraordinary vantage point of our planet, of who and where we all are in space together. I remember thinking that I might feel disconnected like, okay, you know, it's the farthest. I'm always hopeful that I might get to go, like to the moon or somewhere even



further. But you know at that point that the farthest I would ever had ever been off the planet, and yet I felt more connected looking through that window back at Earth and all that I was that I knew about that place, but that I was discovering from looking at it from looking at it from a totally different perspective than I think I sometimes had when I had my feet on it. And so I think for me, that really opened up this idea of not just connected connection, but of inner connectivity, and how everything is so connected, so tied together in a way that there's a dependence, whether we want to believe it or not. And I think that that perspective allowed me to bring it back to Earth, and you know, and then think about that and all the stuff I do, just on any regular daily basis, that that reminder that there's nothing that's independent of anything else.

Hylke Faber 09:01

Do you remember that first moment when you caught a glimpse of Earth sitting out in space? I'm thinking about the first time as a child, I took a plane and I was above the clouds. What was it like the first that very first moment? Do you remember that?

Nicole Stott 09:18

I do, and it was very like you say it was very similar, similar to that sensation, you know, I my dad built and flew small airplanes when I was growing up. So I got to fly in these little things. I have vivid memory of that first time lifting off the planet, looking back, you know, and seeing cars look like little, you know, little toys, and how our houses, you know, you thought one city was so far from the other, and yet they're not. And that same, and there was a beauty to it too, right? And that same kind of thing looking out the window of the space shuttle, and that's where I had my first view of Earth from Space was through like the cockpit window of the space shuttle, and I thought I had. Paired myself, right? I had spoken to my colleagues, I had watched all the videos that I could. I had seen the, you know, the really gorgeous pictures of Earth from Space. But I think there's something, when you experience something yourself, where the awesomeness of it just, it's more than just seeing it, right? It's kind of, it gets in you. You feel it. You're open. You know your heart and your mind to it. It just really is impressive. And man, I don't remember if we were over land or water. My guess is water, because that's most of what what we see out the window. But what I remember is just all the colors that we know Earth to be, just glowing, in a way, iridescent, translucent, all of those kinds of artsy words that you might use to describe something, but just glowing in a way crystal clear against the blackest black I had ever seen. And I can tell you every view out the window afterwards, impressed and surprised in some way, it never got old. It never got boring. You never wanted to go pull the shade down, you know, the window shade down to watch the movie or whatever it was. It just like it welcomed you, invited you in, and you wanted to, like, search, explore and discover something new every time you looked out the window.

Hylke Faber 11:20

How did you feel? How did you feel,

Nicole Stott 11:25



you know, I, I it was a bit overwhelming at first. I mean, I felt like I like I had, I had convinced myself that I would, you know, have some understanding of what this was going to be like, right? And when I think back on it, it's like I had kind of prepped myself here, and yet the experience was like way up here. And so it was a bit overwhelming, how beautiful it was, how much of a reality check it was that, oh my gosh, we we do live on a planet in space. You know, we all learn that when we're in kindergarten. Yet there's this, this, like the reality of it out the window and the movement and the, I don't know, just the glowiness of it was a bit overwhelming, but I felt there was a very calming feeling to it. It was, we were speaking earlier, and used the word grounded, and there was this grounded kind of sensation from it. This, this awareness of what that place is to us, this kind of calming nature of that and and I think I was realizing that man, this is, this is what Awe I can I can safely use the word awesome when I describe what I'm seeing out the window. Right, right, yeah,

Hylke Faber 12:48

how I hear this is you were struck. You're awestruck. And I think many of us, most of us, hopefully, all of us listening, have that experience of awe in our lives, yeah, and it comes in different ways and forms, and in what I'm also struck by is the awe you felt by seeing reality in such a total way, in such a Yeah, such, at such a level of abstraction that most of us never get to see and yet be in it and see the perfection in that. That's what I'm sensing. What you're saying, you

Nicole Stott 13:23

know, absolutely and I think that it's I love that you said. You hope that everybody has had some have, has been awestruck at some point. Have have felt that. Because what I really like to convey is that, you know, don't get me wrong. Highly recommend it if you get a chance to go to space and experience Earth out the window, out that way, or, you know, for minutes or days or months, whatever it might be, go for it. I highly, I highly recommend it. But what I think has become even more clear to me, and it continues to feel this way, is that you don't have to go to space to understand that feeling of seeing Earth from space that way, you don't There are so much on wonder that we are surrounded by every day here on Earth. If we open our hearts and our minds to it that and I experience it every day now is like I can be looking at the flower garden behind my backyard, and I'm getting some of that same kind of sensation that I did looking out the window at our planet. And I think we need to do that for ourselves. You know, in your opening today about what's been going on, going on, you know, in the US election and all that stuff this. I think we need to really, really open ourselves up to this on wonder and let it kind of sink in and help guide the way we manage ourselves, manage the way we deal with people around us. And I think it lifts us up. It doesn't bring us down. It really. Lifts us up to appreciate, you know, who and where we all are in space together. You know, yes, yes,

Hylke Faber 15:06

yes. What strikes me is a practice that I sometimes like to do is okay. I can do awe and wonder when I look at a waterfall or, you know, I'm on a mountain here in the desert somewhere. Can I do? Can I can I feel the on wonder when I see the political candidate that I did not vote for? Or can I see the on wonder for people that I do think are are doing things whose choices I disagree with, like, can I still see that?



And what I'm curious about when, when you say this in terms of coming back, because I must, like I feel that in your story, is the gravitational pull of coming back to Earth and saying, okay, so how am I going to apply what I've learned to tell us about how you've learned from being in Space, about applying that perspective. And I think awe and wonder is probably just a piece of that, yeah, to how you live, how you look at the flowers in your garden, how you look at the problems in the world, too. I mean, your house was just flooded by a hurricane, I understand, and you're sitting in an office, makeshift kind of Now to do this conversation with me to tell us about that, how, how's, how's things shifted for you, how you're applying that perspective.

Nicole Stott 16:25

Well, I mean, I try to do it in everything, and I think that you use the words that I'm grateful that you did about being a crewmate, being crew members, right? I think there's something very simple yet powerful in this understanding first of all that we do, we're all on the same planet, right? We all live on this planet in space together. It's our planetary spaceship, right? We, when I think about it, the way I was able to live on this machine in space, right? We build this International Space Station, this space shuttle, well, all these these machines to mimic as best we can what Earth does for us naturally, just so we can survive in that place. And every morning on that machine, we wake up, and one of the very first things we do is we check how much carbon dioxide is in our atmosphere, and how much clean drinking water we have, and the integrity of our thin metal Hall, and absolutely, we check on the health and well being of all the people we're in that place with, right? And so when I came back to Earth, when I was reflecting on this experience I'd had, you know, off the Earth, which I always like to say, is all about being for the Earth. Everything we're doing there is ultimately about improving life on Earth. So it was those things this planet. We're all earthlings, the thin blue line, you know, those were the things that kept coming to me. You know, the only border that matters, that thin blue line of atmosphere and how just really wrapped up in all of that is how important it is for us to accept our role as crewmates and not passengers. And so the one thing that sticks out to me every day of my life since having that experience is, first of all, I wake up in the morning, my feet hit the floor, and I'm like, I am on a planet in space right now where we are sitting here in in Arizona. I'm in Florida. Nico is in Thailand. We are all on a planet in space, spinning right now at 1000 miles an hour together, orbiting the Sun at 67,000 miles an hour. And how important it is for me to take those first steps out of my you know when I wake up in the morning walking on this planet and remind myself that it is really important for me to behave like a crewmate and not a passenger. And everything I do, whether it's the way I deal with my dog or the people I work with or this conversation that we're having today, there is a big difference, or it's a follow on to an election where the person you did not vote for may have won. We need to continue to accept our role as crewmates and be participating members of the crew, and that's a big difference to being a passenger and expecting stuff to happen for you around you and not be involved.

Hylke Faber 19:16

Tell us about how you apply this in situations that you find really challenging. So because all of us, I think, have access, in some way, to this higher perspective who we want to be. And then, man, I was walking on the street on Tuesday, and I saw somebody with the other t shirt, and my brain was like, oh,



and I felt physically ill, and that was going on in my mind. So tell us about how you tell us about maybe a challenging situation you've been through, and how you are maybe going through, and how you are applying this perspective, so we as Earthlings can learn from you. How to Be Good crew mates. Also, when stuff on the spaceship are not going so well?

Nicole Stott 20:04

Yeah, it's, you know, it's interesting. It's just something as simple as a t shirt, right? How it can, how it can make you wonder, What in the world is that person thinking? And then you gotta, I think it's a matter of stepping back. I don't know what that person's experiences are. I don't know really and truly. And it's the same in every day. You know, when you encounter somebody that's just a little bit ruder to you than you want them to be, would expect them to be, and you're like, hey, I do not know what's going on in this person's life, right? And having to just chill a little bit. But I think one of the thing, and, you know, in addition to the crewmate passenger thing, because it does sound a little bit Kumbaya, right? Like, oh, it's so easy to just say you're going to be a crewmate, not a passenger. But one of the things I learned very early on as a as an engineer for NASA, working on the space shuttle program, you know, we're getting these spaceships ready to fly. People that were astronauts were getting ready to fly on them, and they were going to go do these really complex, challenging things. And one of my very favorite people on the planet, a gentleman named Jay Honeycutt, was my my boss at the time, when I first started out, you know, young 20 something. And he had worked through the Apollo program, all the challenges they had, getting to the moon and doing all those really complex things. And he said to all of us young engineers, he's like, You know what? First of all, everything we do, there is going to be some challenge or some complexity to it, and you have to go into it believing there is a solution to the problem. That's number one. And then in the way you deal with the problem needs to be with a here's how we can not, why we can't approach to it. And I have, I have a little astronaut guy on my desk now with this little sign that says, here's how we can not, why we can't with Jay Honeycutt name on it, under it, because it applies to everything. It applies to how you might deal with that person that's walking across the street with the other, you know, t shirt on to just to want to get below the surface, right? To want to understand where that person is coming from. And then it's like, okay, how can we because it's all the same problems that we're trying to solve, right? Yeah, and so how can we find the solutions to this, versus getting bogged down in the why we can't or what we disagree on. And really that that pathway to, you know, to agreement is a big deal. You think about the International Space Station Program, right? I've got this patch. I think it always goes the wrong way on this thing, you know, with these 15 different countries, you know, wrapped around this view of the International Space Station, you know, for over 25 years, where, as representatives of these 15 different countries, through the five international space agencies, we have somehow managed to operate peacefully and successfully in that place. Because number one thing we did was we established the rules of engagement, and here's what our mission is. And it seems, again, it seems like, oh, you know, and we need to be doing that down here. And every engagement we have is like, okay, how am I going to deal with this situation? And I'm going to decide right up front that we have a solution to this problem, and I am going to bury myself in the ways that we can get it done and not get bogged down in the ways that we can't or that we think we can't. I



Hylke Faber 23:25

love it and again, to make sure that we don't come across as to Kumbaya. Yeah, I love this. To meet this what, what your boss said was probably hard won and hard earned wisdom. Can you tell us, maybe, about a difficult situation that you had in space or at some point in your career where you had to struggle a little bit and came out on the other side. Can you tell us about that? Because,

Nicole Stott 23:54

yeah, I think I'm what I'm struggling with is figuring out, like, like, trying to think of one in particular, right? One of the things that I think is interesting is we, you know, on the space station, we are, we're a crew of six or seven people that represent, look at me, do I do it every single time? Represent in that entire time we're representing, even if we don't have somebody from one of these countries on board, we are representing them as part of that crew of six or seven, and at any given time, there's a commander of that crew of six or seven. And we have, we're living on one space station. It's not like the Europeans can only go into the European module, and the US crew members can go in, can only go in the US laboratory. And I mean, we are one crew on one station with one commander that represents this entire cooperative kind of arrangement. And what's nice about being the crew on the space station itself is you've got these 10s of 1000s of people on the ground that are dealing with all the little intricacies. Of the problems that might be happening, whether that's politically or technically, you know, to help us out, but ultimately, we're the ones that have to manage it in that place. And I'll tell you, there's the official language on the space station is English, but we all have to learn to speak Russian because it's, you know, it's part of the agreement. And culturally, there are differences in the way that people want to or have grown up managing problems. And I think I know this is like this long winded, rambling way of saying that. What I found really extraordinary was how you can have all of that different kind of stuff going on, and yet everyone when it really, really matters, for instance, three o'clock in the morning and you're getting an alarm woken up by an alarm that says there's a big hole in your spaceship, and all the air is spewing out. I mean, when people can rally, and, I mean, it was like, the proudest I was on the space station was when we were dealing with challenges that really and truly could be life threatening or could cause the end of the program. And it was this, this kind of, this leveler of all of us, like, Okay, here's what we're really here for. Here's what our mission is, and here's how we have to treat each other in order to be able to survive. And it was kind of, it was really, it was really pleasing, because there's a lot of times where, when that kind of stuff is going on, people tend to go, like, find their corners, right and, and this was nothing like that. We you. I just watched us coming together every time something like that was going on. And again, it's not like, you know, this, like exact example, but I love that you can, I mean, I witnessed it. How we could be from all different kinds of backgrounds. Yeah, have all different kinds of beliefs. And yet, when it in what really matters, based on what we have come to agree on, we are going to be able to support each other and survive to to the extreme that, you know, the extent that's humanly possible, I guess, and that can apply everywhere.

Hylke Faber 27:19



I love that. Like you mentioned that as the as the leveler, yeah. Listen, the bottom line is that we want to survive, and we want to make sure that this program continues, yeah, and therefore that's our we have a mission, and we have some rules of engagement that include collaboration, even if our habits might be to disconnect into our geographical, cultural or preferential corner. So we're not going to do that. We're going to take a break in a moment after the break, I want to ask you that maybe tell us about a specific incident, and maybe tell us about what happened with Nico in that incident, and how you what you learned from that, what you learned from from the specifics of that incident. Because I think that people learn a lot from hearing you tell the really nitty gritty human part of the story, right? Because we see the perfect story so well on TV, and it's, it sounds so good, and then, you know, our neighbor doesn't turn the sprinkler on, we get very upset, or like the colleague on the in the office is not collaborating or not hearing us, and we disconnect, or we feel overwhelmed and we are not being our best. So I'd love you to think about an example of that. We're going to take a short break in a moment, and then we'll maybe think about a specific

Nicole Stott 28:46

incident. Okay, try and try

Hylke Faber 28:49

and before we take a break, for the people that are listening without video, Nico is wearing a jacket, which I believe is an astronaut jacket. Is that right?

Nicole Stott 28:59

Yes, instead of just looking like an old lady, I thought I'd wear the astronaut jacket for you,

Hylke Faber 29:03

partly an old lady, and it has a lot of the stickers on it from that celebrate her 100 years in space. And then also, there's a beautiful, round sticker on it that has a bunch of flags and the symbol of the space program in the middle, suggesting the International Space Program you've been listening to root and unwavering. I'm so grateful that I'm here with Nico stopped a astronaut, aquanaut, and we've been talking about situational awareness, about taking the bigger perspective, and being a crewmate, not a passenger, and practicing this wisdom of, how can we solve this? Yes, we will solve this. How will we solve this? See you after the break.

Presenter 29:52

You are listening to rooted and unwavering presented by growth Leaders Network, the leadership team and culture. Development Company. If you would like to learn more about working on connectedness for yourself, your team or organization, please contact growth leaders network on LinkedIn, and now back to the show.

Hylke Faber 30:17



Welcome back to root and wavering. We're talking to Nico Stott, aquanaut, astronaut, about situational awareness and how do we really practice being good crewmates here on earth? What the question that I'd love to come back to is, so tell us about an incident where your connectedness with yourself and others was really tested, maybe out there in space. And what did you learn from it?

Nicole Stott 30:42

You know, I think, and I, I think that this, this happened in probably a couple different ways. We do a lot of training to prepare, as you can imagine, to prepare to go, go to space. And you mentioned in my bio, one training program that we do in particular that's called Nemo. It like stands for NASA, extreme environment, Mission Operations, you know, like I was telling I think they just wanted to name it Nemo, so they figured out how to make that acronym work. But you know, we're living in an extreme environment underneath the ocean, in this school bus size habitat, for an extended period of time and and ultimately, like in all of the training we do, it's, it's about discovering how to work as a good, successful team, as a crew, and involved in a lot of that is you as an individual, having to accept, discover, Maybe your own strengths and weaknesses, right? And then, you know, there's a lot of type A personalities, as you can imagine, that are in the astronaut office or, you know, fields like this. And it's difficult sometimes to accept that you might have a weakness and that somebody else might be better, better than you at something. But what I found in these kind of training situations, it was really kind of refreshing to be able to discover those things. And for me, you know, the incident, or the kind of incidents, I would say that really stood out were ones where I was particularly challenged, where I was out of my comfort zone in a way that I never had been before. And that happened when, you know, we did this, like Utah Canyon lands trip, there's six of us were out there for 10 days, and we're on our own and we I'm not a hiker kind of person necessarily like it, but I've never done like extreme versions of that, and so it was challenging to me, and what I found was, if we let ourselves, the people around us will lift us up. They will support us, even in a you know, what you might think of as a competitive situation where you're all training and trying to get to the same, you know, like a mission assignment or get to go to space. People can put that, that aside. And, you know, you were mentioning, you said something about TV. You know, how perfect it looks on TV. And I always think, every time I go into the movie theater and I watch a movie about how, where they try to make the drama in the space movie be about the way the people treat each other, and how divisive and like they're only worried about their own survival, or not worried about the survival of their crew, or there's some kind of backstabbing thing going on, and it couldn't be further from the truth in the astronaut office. It is so not like that. I think everybody that I have encountered, and we discover it as part of this training where we are putting ourselves in places that we just don't normally go, you know? And the most difficult of those for me was the underwater experience, because I had, I was a scuba diver, but I was like, recreational scuba diver, right? I didn't want it to be taking my mask off. I didn't want somebody messing with my regulator or having to swim around without, you know, out of I'm all these, like, kind of advanced skill things that I had to mentally overcome to be able to do that and physically, like go train, to be able to survive in that because at 60 feet underwater, after an hour, you can't swim safely to the surface to escape a problem. So you have to, you know, you and your crew have to get into a safe configuration before you can go back to the top. And the same is true in space. You can't just hop in your spaceship anytime you want if



something goes wrong up there and come back come back to Earth, you have to get your crew and the vehicle in a safe configuration first. And that for me was, I don't know, I don't think I'm really answering your question, Hilda, but it's like, yeah, it goes, it goes to the same thing. It's like, accepting, first of all. That we don't all have the answers to everything, right, and that our colleagues, who we are depending on who are depending on us, might have those answers might be the stronger one in the situation that can then lift us all up. And I look for that everywhere I go now I work with, I'm looking, first of all, okay, is the purpose? You know, are we? Do we have a similar purpose in mind with what we're doing? Are you somebody I'm going to want to work with that? I'm going to have a good time, you know? I'm going to enjoy myself, but at the same time, when it hits the fan, when things are not going well, are you going to be the one I can trust to have my back? And will I know that you'll look in my eyes and trust that I'll have yours. And that's, that's the way I'm trying to apply everything I learned in space is and it comes down to being a crewmate. You know, sounds kind of hokey, but it's like you've got to understand your own limitations, and you've got to be willing to accept help from others in order to make that all work,

Hylke Faber 36:03

that sense of, I sense the sense of trust, like there's a sense of, I'm I'm gonna trust. I'm really struck by this example Nicole, of being out in Utah hiking. Yeah, I love hiking. So it's like, yeah, anytime. And I'm sure it was extreme, and it sounds like it was, there was an element of being in selection process before becoming an astronaut. So there was a bit of like, Yeah, almost like Survivor, like the TV program, yeah, but not quite. And yet, what you discovered was people will be there for me. It's not like The Hunger Games where we have to kill each other, right?

Nicole Stott 36:44

Yeah, and it was, so that's such a great thing, isn't it, to know that that's and it made me happy to know that NASA and our other, you know, space agencies, that's the kind of person they're looking for. You can be in competition for something, but the best way that you can for you to survive and to shine is to be with the one lifting everybody else up at the same same time. And, yeah, I mean, you know, we do interviews. I was fortunate enough to be on the other side of the table before I retired from NASA to get to interview candidates coming in for the office right to be selected as astronaut candidates, and once you get to that table for the interview, you've already satisfied right, the Career and Education requirements, right? I want to know what kind of person you are. You know, do I want to be locked up for in a relatively confined space for months at a time with you. Do you have a person? Do you have a personality? Are you going to set the torque wrench back to zero? Are you going to be respectful of the other five or six people or that are in this confined space with you? And are you going to have my back when you know things don't go as planned as they will? And it's interesting, the kind of conversations you can have, where you can you can kind of eke that out just by talking to somebody and and I love that. That's what we're not just looking at the person who can fly an airplane or do the science. We're looking at the whole person. Like do they use their whole brain? Are they? Are they going to be the person like you said that you can trust in whatever situation.

Hylke Faber 38:23



Yes, because I'm thinking that many of us, and I see this with teams all the time, that we hesitate to reach out for help, or we hesitate to bring up the difficult issue, or we hesitate to say, I don't know yet, because there's we are wired to think that the other person's gonna take advantage, like we fear other people, as we fear parts of ourselves. And what you're saying is no actually, there is a part alive and well in human beings that even in a very comparative, very high stakes situation where everybody wants to become an astronaut and get the space, is those people that actually win, paradoxically, is are those that take care of each other, absolutely.

Nicole Stott 39:15

And it's really nice to know that, that that is going on and, you know, and I think it's happening in other places too. A lot of my colleagues and I, we, we talk a lot about, like, what's the secret sauce, you know, that that NASA or human space flight, I would say, is, is a really good example of it. You know, we, there's a lot going on with, you know, how we welcome different people to even participate in, in things, and different jobs and experiences and man, the NASA Astronaut Office, the human space flight program, in just 50 years, we've gone from, if you just look at women, we've gone from one woman in Mission Control, one woman in the Launch Control Center, to both of those really cool. Operations being run by extraordinary women. And now, when you look at all the people sitting in those controls, it's just this mix of humanity of all different kinds of humans, every flavor you know, is in in that mix and and the same in the astronaut office. You know, there's about 40 active NASA astronauts right now, I would say almost it's about 5050, female male in that office. You don't see that. You don't even see that in the demographic of the university students that you know the program, I mean, and most engineering programs struggle to have, you know, 20% female enrollment in their programs, not to mention the other demographics that you know you want to get in the mix. And I think the underlying, you know, maybe the sauce, the secret sauce, is in the fact that when NASA hires, or NASA is looking for people, or NASA is coming up with new programs and how they want to support that they are just welcoming whomever, right? It's a very welcoming environment, and people feel that way when they come into it, versus getting any sense that you're, you know, because I have brown hair and my feet are, you know, kind of big, I'm not going to get in the door you know for, or whatever characteristic it is, or belief, or you know, any of it. And it's, I think we need to learn how to, instead of saying we need this many of this person as many of that person, and what you know, the successful they're not, we need to just figure out, how do we welcome everyone who might want to be part of this? And I think we'll, I think we'll be opening many, many more doors if we start doing that, I think. And it allows not just the, I mean, the, you know, I think about experiential diversity, but you know, across the board, it starts to work. And it's why this patch I did again, you look at all these different countries, all the different cultures and backgrounds and histories that are coming together to make these crews successful, and it's because there's all these different little flavors of things and thoughts about stuff that make the solution to the problems even better than they would be if you just were looking at Any one flag on them.

Hylke Faber 42:21

So what strikes me is that what NASA does, in some way, is to teach us about interconnectedness, absolutely, planet, planetarily, you know where we are as a species, on this planet with other planets,



especially and it does so by having a culture of interconnectedness, which is a much higher wisdom than on average, we're able to practice on planet earth today, right where that feels like NASA, in a way, by having connected itself to such a high mission, which, at A nuts and bolts level, seems to be about getting people into space, but at the you could say more esoteric level, energetic level, it's about teaching us, as humans, something about interconnectedness. And the bigger view, like the first question we had today was about, what's it like? And that all right? And everybody has that, that that dream for that. And I think part of that is to be able to name that and say aspiration in everyone is that interconnectedness. And we can only experience that by actually practicing that. Yeah,

Nicole Stott 43:36

I mean, we have to open ourselves to it. And, you know, and I love the way you're You're saying that because, I mean, I think interconnectivity is, is at all of it, and this idea of connection, right? You know, we go out, we go out in space, we go on to the space station and and I really love it when people develop an understanding of the fact that all these people coming together, you know, the 10s of 1000s on the ground across the planet that are working together to make it possible for us to do that. And then the six or seven people on the station, you know, one of the coolest things is that everything we're doing there together is ultimately about improving life on Earth, you know, bringing that value of what we can do in space back to Earth. And then, you know, you think about this connection and relationship, you know, I spoke to looking out the window and feeling more connected to this planet that I had, you know, maybe acknowledged that I did when I was on it. And the same thing is true when we send, you know, our robotic missions out, right? You know, we go, you know, Cassini, the Cassini mission that went to Saturn, you know, New Horizons out to Pluto and the rovers that are on Mars. And we're learning all of these really incredible things about our place in the universe. You know how these planets are related to us? And you know about the rings of Saturn? You know that we all grew up, you know, these iconic. That planet kind of thing. And then in the end, the thing that strikes us the most, and I get goosebumps thinking about it, the thing that strikes us the most is that picture of Saturn and the rings with the little.of light below it. That's us. And we're like, Oh my God. It's like, because you can then make a connection. You can establish a relationship to that planet through that little.of light that doesn't look like Earth at all. It just looks like this little.of light. And yet we know that's us. We want to understand our place in it all, and I think that's what space and believing there's a solution to the problem, wanting to go at things where it's about how we can do it, not getting bogged down and why we can't. That's why politics is such a pain, right? There's all this getting bogged down with the here's why we can't, when we really need to be looking at here, you know? Here's how we can and and I love it. I love that space exploration does that for us. And I don't know, I just see so much in it. And when you think about, like, the back to Earth stuff too, like, what's coming back to us, we'll get, I get this all the time, like, well, what are we doing going off to space and spending all this money in space when we have all these problems here on Earth, and I'm like, Oh my gosh, everything we're doing in space is about improving life on Earth. NASA and others might not communicate it as well as we need to, but that's the fact. And all of these problems, these planetary challenges that we have, whether it's energy or water or, you know, whatever it might be around, around our planetary spaceship, the majority of the information that we need to solve those problems is coming to us from space. And, you know, and you



know, on a day to day basis, we just don't realize it's so ubiquitous. I mean, I'm going to pick this thing up. This is like the magic box, right? You know, we just, where does it all come from? It has, it has its roots in what we do in space every day.

Hylke Faber 46:59

I was so struck by when you talked about Saturn and the little prick of point, prick of light, yeah, of Earth. And in saying that everything we do is about improving life on Earth and how we relate to this is like we are. We get goosebumps because we become aware of our place in the hole right now, I'm gonna invite us to make that super micro meaning our place on this in the hole, as you and I as as Nico, as hylka, as whoever is listening, Nico, who is supporting us from Thailand with the Technology, like all of us who are listening like, how, how is this informing you, as you put your feet on the ground, as you do your work? How does this inform you?

Nicole Stott 47:55

Well, I think it's, I think it's goes back to the situational awareness thing and and to the idea of the awe and wonder, right? You use the words awestruck. And I try to, I try to look for that every day and everything. And the way I think about it is, remember, back in 1968 that was the first time the humans, you know, the Apollo eight mission, went to the moon. They didn't land. They orbited the moon. And that's where we got that iconic Earth rise image, you know that? And I get goosebumps thinking about that. Like, can you imagine being those guys in that spaceship, and you're, you know, going around this gray moon, and then out of nowhere, this gorgeous colored planet rises above the horizon of the the moon in front of you, like that. And then they shared it with all of us, right? It was this awakening, I think, and, and I think that's what I try to build into every day. And so it's so we I think about it like Earth rise moment. You know, that definitely was an earth rise for humanity, actually, right? There's the who and where we all are in space together, no denying it, except for the three guys that were orbiting the moon and and we can bring that into our lives every day in some way. We can think about our kids. We can you don't even have to be looking at something. It can just be a memory of something. I mean you, before we started the podcast today, we took a couple minutes just to chill, just to be quiet and meditate on the conversation we're going to have on, maybe what was going to go on on our day, but just to, like, kind of transcendently, if nothing you know, like to transcend where we were about, about to be and and I think that's really important, that that piece, that Earth rise idea of what we can bring into our lives every day to impact every decision we make, how we how we have this exchange together. It's and I'm hoping that the folks in DC will be doing that same kind of thing. Right? You know, we kind of keep going back to that in this this relative time frame, but it's, it's, it's the respect thing as well. It's not just being aware of what's going on around you, but like respecting that things are going to be different in different places. I love traveling with my son when he was little around the world. I think about Nico in Thailand. I mean, it's a different experience to live and be in that place, and yet, the underlying motivation of every human everywhere is survival and thriving and love and their family and all of those that's happening everywhere. And you know, the more we look at ourselves living on a planet together as our planetary spaceship, with just that one thin blue line being the the border that matters. I think it, it's just, it's that level checker. Again, I think it's



Hylke Faber 50:54

the level checker. I love that you said the little blue line, that's the only line that matters, which I infer from as I think about how you wake up in the morning, the thinking about when I was waking up as a little child, I thought that my life was basically my bedroom, and then the farm and the cows in the village, that's that was, that was the world. And I made everything with that in mind when that comes sometimes hubris or arrogance or narrow mindedness or whatever it is, and sometimes the lines stand out today between me and a person that may be different from me I disagree with, and what I hear you say is when You are connecting to that transcendental perspective, to that bigger perspective, we don't have to use difficult words, just seeing that we are part of this thing that's a piece of light separated from the rest of the universe by a blue little line inspires a sense of awe. It inspires a sense of humility in me, as I hear you talk, also taking myself not too seriously, yeah, at the same time. Like there's an automatic wanting to serve. Like, how would it's like, almost like, holding a baby you you want to take care of it. You cannot do them. It's just too beautiful. Like, when somebody gives you a beautiful flower, you're not going to crush it, you just want to hold it. And all of that comes to me. So I'm so grateful that you're sharing this with us today. So I tell us in these last few minutes, because this hour flew by. What? What is Nico working on today? Oh,

Nicole Stott 52:41

well, my house, first of all, but, yeah, but what, you know, what we talked about earlier, I am really trying to in whatever I'm doing, if I'm at a school talking, if I'm doing a keynote for a company somewhere, or if I'm really getting to focus on the work of like the space for Art Foundation, or this organization called space for a better world. It underlying it all, I think is purpose is really looking to, to try to be extending the experience I had in space in a way that's meaningful. And, you know, I'm finding that the place I can do that best is, is by using my art to communicate with audiences that might not otherwise even know we have a space station, let alone that we are off the earth. For the earth in all of that work that we're doing, how we can come together as an international community to do really good, positive things for our planet and for the people that I would say, not just but the all life that occupies our planet, together and and I think there's, there's something to and the connection to me too is really important. That's why I really was happy to take on this conversation with you. Hylka is because I think that's such an important word, and extending it to the interconnectivity idea and and embedded in all that is inspiration, right? It's a I really feel like, you know, there's there's education and there's information, but we need to be inspiring people to think about the solutions, to think about this planet that we share. And, you know, when we go to space, I remember it. I remember looking, wanting to look back to Earth and seeing Florida. I wanted to see Florida because I thought of Florida as my home. And very quickly, Florida became this beautiful part of a planet that's my home. And that's exactly what I think you were getting to in, you know, in the last the context of the last word you were saying is that, you know, broadening yourself beyond the farm to a planet that's your home, and it is such, I don't there's really good purpose in that. And what you were saying too is, I think, in that you then cannot deny the call to action. That comes from it, the necessity for free for you to behave like a crewmate, not a passenger, and if I do nothing else in the rest of my life, I hope that I can in whatever



work I'm doing, whatever art I'm creating, either on my own or with kids and other people around the world. I want there to be purpose in it, and I want, I really want, people to think about me like, wow, she was a pretty good crewmate in all of this.

Hylke Faber 55:23

And you're inviting us to see our Absolutely, whether you like it or not, we're all already, we're in this spaceship. There's no, there's no selection process. We're here. And it's

Nicole Stott 55:36

funny, isn't it? You know, I think there's, it is, it's, it's simple, yet really, really powerful. This, this distinction between crewmate and and passenger. By choosing the path of the crewmate, I mean, we really do. We have the power together to create a future for all life on Earth that's as beautiful as it looks from space, and that, that is a compelling call to action. I think it's what you know, it's what we all like at our core, are hopeful to do with the gifts that we have, that we can bring to bear. And you know, why not do it? Join the crew.

Hylke Faber 56:12

What would you say to last question? What would you say to a person who is not feeling it today, who is just feeling overwhelmed by whatever problem they have, whether it's, you know, at work with a teammate, maybe they are at, you know, financial challenge, maybe they lost their job. Maybe they have a health challenge. Maybe there's a family situation. Maybe they're feeling very overwrought with global warming. Maybe they're worried about the genocide that happens. You know, anything, yeah, what would you say to a person that just feels like, ah,

Nicole Stott 56:56

yeah, yeah. I mean, that's a difficult question, because we all have our everybody has something going on, right? But I think that I would kind of go back to what you had us do before we got on this call, I have found that the closest I can get to that just immersive, transcended experience that I had looking out the window of a spaceship is meditation, is earthing, you know, is allowing yourself, even in the midst of, and I've been doing it a lot lately with a flooded house, is just to kind of step outside of it a little bit and take a moment, you know, just chill. And it seems a little bit selfish actually, you know? I mean, I think in the midst of all of those things that you just described, some of the worst thing you know, things you just don't want to have to be a part of or know, are going on, is like to just really chill and take a moment and allow yourself to to calm in a way that we don't always do for ourselves. And I found when I do that I don't know, my mind opens up to think about things a little bit more positively. I can see where I can see better, where I might have a place, you know, as part of the solution, and not, you know, we in all of that that goes on. We really do. I think it's human beings. I think we have a tendency get bogged down, and the man, this is overwhelming part of it, and yet there's always some little thing that we we can be doing to to make it better. And so I respect, I'm really, really pleased that you had us chill before the call.



Hylke Faber 58:37

And I appreciate you pointing that out and also putting that into the very, almost mundane but very real challenge of having a house that's flooded, and saying, Hey, even astronaut earthlings crewmate Nico needs to kill and take a step back, right?

Nicole Stott 58:53

That's my husband. Yeah,

Hylke Faber 58:56

you talk about Yes. So, so even, and I think that's such a beautiful takeaway for me, even when we've seen the most beautiful thing, the human things that we encounter, can still get us off kilter, Absolutely, it's still possible, and we then can restore ourselves to perspective, to sanity, but taking a step back, and maybe that provides us with that view from the window that you were sitting at those years ago. Yeah, that's like, Oh, this is the bigger part. And part of this is the higher intelligence that I'm part of. And what's my part of that? It's, it's a very humble and yet resolute step back to see the bigger the bigger picture. Nico, anything you'd like to say to close this conversation,

Nicole Stott 59:51

well, I just want to thank you for inviting me to even have the conversation. I love that there's different audiences around the world that are open to the. These conversations and be hearing what you know, little tidbits might come out of what I might say, you know. But I think, I think this is, this is big steps in, in the crew mate process, if you will, you know, in the in the recruiting of crewmates for our planetary home and and I'm hopeful that that through this you know somebody, if just one person, got a little glimmer of what you know might be possible for them, I'm I'm hopeful in that. So thank you for including me.

Hylke Faber 1:00:34

Thank you, Nico. It's been a true honor and true pleasure to sit with you and to be part of recruitment effort, for for crew members, to to to live with you in that experience of how you've experienced a transcendence the biggest, the bigger perspective, and to to take that away and say, Hey, maybe that informs that bigger perspective, that there are always possibilities when you take that bigger perspective. So you've been listening to rude and unwavering if you like this podcast, you can always find us on Spotify Apple, whenever, wherever else you find your podcast, these are also recorded in LinkedIn and YouTube and other places you can find them. This was episode 49 I was here with Nico stock Equinox, astronaut, mom, artist, crew member and crew member recruiter. And you've been listening to rooted, unwavering, where we help leaders from all walks of life connect more deeply to their innate potential. Become a crew member. See you next time at root and wavering.

Presenter 1:01:53

Thank you for joining us in today's episode of rooted and unwavering leadership conversations about courageous connectedness presented by the leadership development company, growth Leaders



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