

188 Days in Space

Shannon Lucid is an American biochemist and a NASA astronaut who, at one time, held the record for the longest duration in space by an American, as well as by a woman. She has flown in space five times.

Born in Shanghai, China, to Baptist missionary parents Oscar and Myrtle Wells, she grew up in Bethany, Okla., and obtained a biochemistry degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1973. She was selected for the NASA Astronaut Corps in 1978, and her first space flight was in June 1985 on Space Shuttle Discovery. She is best known, however, for her fifth space flight, when she spent 188 days in space, from March 22 to September 26, 1996, including 179 days aboard *Mir*, the Russian space station.



Lucid was not scheduled to spend that much time on *Mir*, but her return was delayed twice because of technical difficulties with shuttle booster rockets and adverse weather conditions. From 2002 to 2003, Lucid served as the chief scientist of NASA. Since 2005, she has performed as the capsule communicator for a number of space shuttle missions. As of January 2008, she has worked in management in the Astronaut Office at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

What many reports failed to include in the wake of Lucid's record-setting stay on *Mir* was the excellent reputation that she developed with her Russian hosts. That reputation was based not only on her technical expertise as an astronaut but also on the fact that her Russian counterparts never once heard her complain during her six-month stay. Every time Lucid was notified of a shuttle delay, she took the news in stride.

Valery Ryumin, a Russian space manager, noted that Lucid reacted like Russian cosmonauts do when their missions are extended. Ryumin said that Russia deliberately chose cosmonauts "who are strong enough not to show any feelings" when they receive bad news.

It is an important lesson for those of us who are leaders in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home. Complaining not only makes you feel negative, which is harmful enough, but it spreads negativity to others.

True leaders will attempt to turn unpleasant or disappointing situations into positive ones by exercising self-control, maintaining a good attitude, and speaking uplifting words.

– Beecher Hunter