
The Possibility of Space Colonization Becoming the Usual Practice of the Future

Space colonization may be the future. NASA reports that establishing a human colony is the next step in space exploration. Who will be the first colonists, hailed as pioneers and heroes? I know I will not be among them. The potential for physical dangers, the dedication to a single lifestyle and the likely personal disagreements with other colonists make it impossible to commit the rest of my life to science.

I could not accept the risk associated with space colonization. Liftoff alone could be deadly long before reaching the final destination. Although technology is improving, numerous rockets have been destroyed on takeoff or re-entry; they are far from safe. In addition, no one knows how extended time on Mars or the moon would affect a body. Astronauts lose muscle mass while living in space for just short periods of time. While the colony will have stronger gravity than the space station, human bodies are not built for other atmospheres. Finally, too much safety equipment, including space suits, oxygen tanks, and vital signs monitoring, would be required just to perform daily activities. There might be pods in which the colonists could move freely, but freedom outdoors would disappear. Failure of any of these safety systems could mean death, and living with fear all the time is hardly desirable. I will leave the mission to the daredevils.

The first colonists will subject themselves to a certain lifestyle that will be almost impossible to escape from. As a basic example, there will be limited meal options. Even if crops can be grown, there will not be a large variety, at least in the beginning. That leaves limited produce and freeze-dried meals sent from Earth. This is something I could adapt to if necessary, but it is not a lifestyle I seek. Beyond the triviality of food, the colonists' lives will be dedicated to survival and science. There will be research and experiments to perform for analysis back on Earth. Colonists will have little reference on how to deal with the unique challenges of their new land. Taking on this challenge is admirable, but I believe I could make a greater contribution to human advancement on Earth, while also still retaining the freedom to pursue my own hobbies.

The thing that could quite possibly make life in space the most miserable is the other humans that come from Earth. While there will have to be extreme vetting of the psychological wellness of the colonists, and approvals of the group dynamic, there would still be disagreements to resolve. Such a stressful environment can cause small issues to turn into larger ones. It is common advice not to mix home life and work life, but it would be impossible to separate the two when isolated on Mars or the moon. Coworkers and family would become one, and personal disagreements could carry into the professional work or vice versa. There would be no vacation, no real space to cool down. Eventually, a colony might be as large as a city, but this is not likely in the first generation of colonists. Interpersonal issues are highly stressful, and prolonged arguments could make life unbearable. Humans are far too unpredictable to trust that personal relations between colonists would not become an issue.

Space exploration is a vast area for humans to explore. Volunteering to be part of the great experiment of space colonization is admirable, but I would not be willing to give up my life for it. There is so much more to still explore on Earth. Space colonization is one possible way that humanity can continue to develop, but there are other ways to develop as a species on our

planet. I can impact the lives of more people on Earth today by remaining here and using my talents to make changes in the lives of those around me.

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