

Mike Massimino

Astronaut, Columbia Professor, Author, Media Personality

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Courage / Heroism
- Education
- Inspiration / Achievement
- Science
- Space Exploration
- Technology / Alternate Technology

About Mike Massimino

Mike Massimino is a former NASA Astronaut, a New York Times bestselling author, a Columbia University engineering professor, and an advisor at The Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum. A veteran of two space shuttle missions and four spacewalks, Mike was the first person to tweet from space, holds the team record for the most spacewalking time on a single space shuttle mission, and successfully completed the most complicated spacewalk ever attempted to repair the Hubble Space Telescope.

Mike persisted through three rejections over 7 years on his way to becoming an astronaut, including overcoming a medical disqualification by training his eyes and brain to see better.

He has had a recurring role as himself on the CBS comedy "The Big Bang Theory," is the host for the Science Channel Series "The Planets and Beyond," was featured in National Geographic Television's "One Strange Rock," is a frequent expert guest on news programs, including Good Morning America, The Today Show, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, and CNBC, and has been called the real-life astronaut who inspired George Clooney's role in the movie "Gravity."

Mike's book, Spaceman: An Astronaut's Unlikely Journey to Unlock the Secrets of the Universe, has received rave reviews and is a New York Times best-seller. His new book, Spaceman: The True Story of a Young Boy's Journey to Becoming an Astronaut, was published in April of 2020.

During his NASA career he received two NASA Space Flight Medals, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, and the American Astronautical Society's Flight Achievement Award. In 2018, Mike was inducted into the Long Island Air and Space Hall of Fame. The street that Mike grew up on in Franklin Square, Long Island has been renamed "Mike Massimino Street."

Mike uses humor and his unique storytelling ability to inspire audiences to identify the passion in their work, to use teamwork and innovation to solve problems, to provide leadership in the face of adversity and crisis, and to never give up when pursuing a goal.

Select Keynotes

- **One Out of a Million is Not Zero: When the odds are against you, do it anyway.**

Mike's dream of becoming an astronaut began when he was six years old watching television as Neil Armstrong took the first steps on the moon. The path to achieving this dream was wrought with unexpected challenges, failures, disappointments, and self-doubt. Mike was rejected three times by NASA including a medical disqualification which Mike overcame by teaching his eyes to "see better." His persistence paid off with two missions on the Space Shuttle and four spacewalks on the Hubble Space Telescope. Mike stresses that as long as you keep trying no matter what the obstacles, achieving your goal is possible.

- **The Team's Success is Your Success: You cannot do this alone. You will succeed or fail as a team.**

The culture at NASA emphasized the importance of teamwork, and put the success of the team and the mission above individual accomplishments. Strong relationships between team members were forged through the extraordinary experiences that Mike and his fellow astronauts shared during their training and spaceflights. This teamwork enabled them to successfully complete their training, overcome tragedy, build the International Space Station, and repair the Hubble Space Telescope. Mike discusses how the NASA models for teamwork and leadership can be applied to the business world and in life.



- **Find Another Way Around: When you think all hope is lost, it's not.**

On the final Space Shuttle servicing mission to the Hubble Space Telescope, Mike was tasked with the most complicated spacewalk ever attempted: the in-space repair of a delicate scientific instrument. Mike made a major error during that spacewalk, but the ground control team and the astronauts in space worked together to come up with an innovative solution that saved the day and the mission.

Although not every problem has an obvious solution, Mike explains how preparation, innovation and creativity can help us with overcoming unforeseen challenges.

- **Get Ready to Pivot: Change is a constant, be ready to adapt.**

Mike's second space flight was one of the last of the Space Shuttle Program. It was time for NASA to retire the space shuttle and move on to the next phase in space exploration, which included relying heavily on private companies and on automation. Many at NASA did not want to accept these changes. But the last few years have shown that those who accepted these changes have thrived, while those who resisted are no longer contributing. Technological progress and entrepreneurship are needed in every industry, and the NASA team learned to embrace the changes in order to move on to that next phase. Our future in space is bright because of these changes.

- **An Astronaut's View of Planet Earth: We are living in a paradise, remember the big picture.**

The orbit of the Hubble Space Telescope is 350 miles above the Earth, 100 miles higher than the International Space Station. From that altitude, astronauts are able to see the curvature of our planet, and spacewalking astronauts are able to take in the magnificent views through their helmet visors with a 360-degree view of the Earth and the surrounding universe. Mike describes his observations and feelings while viewing our planet, including its fragility and the importance of taking care of it.

- **Space: The Final Commercial Frontier: With greater access to space, possibilities are limitless.**

For over 50 years, space programs were conducted exclusively by governments. NASA has long hoped to turn over some of its endeavors to private industry. We are now transitioning to programs with new opportunities for private enterprise – NASA's partnership with companies like Elon Musk's Space X, along with commercial ventures such as Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin. Opportunities for commercialization of space seem as endless as space itself, and Mike provides insights into what we can expect.

- **Recognizing the Purpose in your Work**

No matter how much we enjoy our jobs we sometimes get caught up in the day to day activities and can forget the big picture. This can even happen to astronauts. Mike stresses the importance of trying to remember the reason why we work as hard as we do. In addition to supporting our families and enjoying the challenges of our jobs, we should always remember how we are making the world a better place through our work. For Mike, as an astronaut, it was servicing and repairing the Hubble Space Telescope. Arguably the greatest scientific instrument ever built, Hubble made some of the greatest scientific discoveries in history while showing us the beauty of our universe. Contributing to great projects makes all the hard work and sacrifice worthwhile.

- **Finding and Pursuing that next Challenge**

After realizing a dream, there comes a time when one needs to find that next dream in life. For Mike, his astronaut career was a little boy dream come true. After 18 years it was time to find a new challenge in life and a new dream. Mike discusses the difficulty of giving up the most exciting and interesting job he could ever have for the next phase in life. New challenges are needed for happiness, and there is no reason why one dream job cannot be replaced by another. In Mike's case that has meant a new career as a university professor, museum advisor, author, television personality, and speaker sharing his lessons and experiences from his life as an astronaut.

- **STEM Education**

Inspired at age 6 to become an astronaut while watching Neil Armstrong taking the first steps on the moon, Mike had no idea how to make his idea come true. But he discovered in elementary, middle, and high school that he liked math and science and decided to study engineering in college. Although being an astronaut was not on his mind in college, Mike followed his STEM interests which eventually would lead him to NASA and the astronaut program. Following one's interests can lead toward a happy and successful career even if a person is undecided about what they want to do with their lives while in school. Mike's parents never had the opportunity to go to college, but going to college and getting a STEM education changed his life. He learned not only about engineering, but also about how dreams come true – by getting an education in an area in which one is passionate.

- **Safety is Everyone's Job**

Mike's first flight was on Space Shuttle Columbia STS-109. The very next time Columbia went to space with the crew of STS-107, it had a breach in its thermal protection system while re-entering the Earth's atmosphere destroying the vehicle and killing everyone on board. Space shuttle missions are generally flown in order. STS-107 was assigned prior to and was originally scheduled to fly before STS-109. But launch delays forced NASA planners to switch the flight order. Mike's crew got the slot previously given to STS-107, and STS-107 got the original STS-109 slot. Mike and his crew returned safely to Earth, the crew of STS-107 did not. Spaceflight is a dangerous business and now it had claimed the lives of 7 of his friends. Mike found that much can be learned from investigating space flight accidents, not only the Columbia accident but also the Challenger Space Shuttle accident and the Apollo 1 fire. He shares lessons learned from tragic accidents and miscues and how to move forward. The biggest lesson is that safety is everyone's job, and everyone has a responsibility to speak up when an

unsafe situation arises.

- **VIRTUAL: Being Resilient and Adaptable in Times of Change and Uncertainty**

Mike's second space flight was one of the last of the Space Shuttle Program. It was time for NASA to retire the shuttle and move on to the next phase in space exploration. That next phase included flying exclusively on the Russian Soyuz for a few years, and working with commercial companies to provide launch services in the future. Many at NASA did not want to accept these changes. But the last few years have shown that those who accepted these changes have thrived, while those who resisted are no longer contributing. We may not like the new world we are now living in that has forced us to change the way we do business. But by accepting change and knowing that change can provide unseen opportunities, we can still shoot for the stars.

- **VIRTUAL: Resourcefulness when Recovering from Tragedy and Disappointment**

Mike's first spaceflight was on Space Shuttle Columbia. On Columbia's next voyage, the crew and the space shuttle were lost during re-entry. It was devastating to lose seven of his friends in an instant. While grieving and consoling the families of those fallen heroes, another reality set in: what would happen to the future of the space program? The International Space Station was not yet completed and the Hubble Space Telescope needed repair. Mike and his colleagues would not let the loss of their friends be in vain. Innovative procedures, tools, and techniques were developed to get the shuttle flying again to finish that important work. Mike shares stories of how that same effort and attitude is needed now to recover from the effects of COVID-19 on our businesses and lives.

- **VIRTUAL: Working with Your Team and Clients Over Distance**

Mike and his fellow astronauts spent hours in simulators practicing how they would work and communicate with their support team in the Mission Control Center (MCC) while literally a world apart. He also spent years as a Capcom (Spacecraft Communicator) in MCC communicating with and supporting astronauts in space. Critical problems arose during Mike's final spacewalk on the Hubble Space Telescope, and even though support team members were at various locations on Earth, they were able to save the day for Mike in space. Although we are now physically separated from each other today due to COVID-19, we can strive to be the person that people can call for help. Reach out and try to be someone else's Mission Control Center.

- **VIRTUAL: Dealing with Isolation**

Mike's NASA training taught him valuable lessons on how to thrive in isolation. Some tips are: try to embrace the situation; concentrate on meaningful work; keep open the lines of communication between friends, family and co-workers; be respectful of the well-being of your crewmates; keep up your self-care and exercise; enjoy the beauty of our planet; and use time away from the hustle and bustle of our normal daily routines to think introspectively about our lives.

Select Book Titles

- **2020:** Spaceman: The True Story of a Young Boy's Journey to Becoming an Astronaut
- **2016:** Spaceman: An Astronaut's Unlikely Journey to Unlock the Secrets of the Universe

Select Articles

- [Big Bang Theory's Geekiest Cameos](#)
- [What being aboard the space shuttle taught me about sheltering in place for coronavirus](#)
Op-ed Mike wrote for the NY Daily News
- [The No. 1 lesson on persistence from an astronaut who got rejected by NASA 3 times before getting the job // CNBC](#)
- ['I'm An Astronaut. This Is What It's Like To Walk In Space'](#)
Article written by Mike for Newsweek
- [Inspired by real astronauts, Netflix sends Hilary Swank 'Away' to Mars](#)
Mike served as consultant, worked with actors and had a cameo in Netflix series "Away"
- [A message from Mike in quarantine. Advice for dealing with isolation from a man who experienced it in space!](#)
- [Popular Mechanics - The Best Space Books of 2020](#)
- [SpaceX Launch 'Opens up the Doors' to Exploration, Astronaut Mike Massimino Predicts](#)
- [Spaceman: An Astronaut's Guide To Quarantine And Social Distancing](#)
- [Former Nasa Astronaut Talks Fixing Hubble And Covid-19 Quarantine Tips](#)
- [Samsung's Latest VR Moonshot Literally Takes a Shot at the Moon](#)

- [Astronauts Share the Personal Items They Took into Space](#)
- [ASTRONAUT ORDERED A PIZZA FROM SPACE SO IT'D BE READY AS SOON AS HE RETURNED TO EARTH](#)
- [Feel What It's Like to Walk on the Moon at This Free VR Experience](#)
- ['Personal Space': Museum exhibits astronauts' spaceflight mementos](#)

Select Testimonials

I have hired countless speakers to close out large user events and I will say that Mike is one of the best that I have ever hired. Not only is he a down to earth person and easy to talk with, but the message he delivers relates to everyone. Normally when you hire an external speaker to close out an event, there is usually a good size drop-off of people who are trying to catch a flight out of town. Not in our case. I looked around the room when Mike started and it was close to being as crowded as day 1 of the event (roughly 1300 people). Also, afterwards, Mike signed his books for attendees and we estimate that 500+ were in line to get a book signed. I would HIGHLY recommend Mike to anyone who needs a closing guest speaker.

– *Acumatica*

Mike is so inspiring, motivational, and GENUINE!!! His stories are amazing – I could listen to him all day! It was truly a hit with our audience. Please thank Mike on behalf of the entire team. I hope we get to work together on another event in the future.

– *Boston-based Retirement Services Organization Virtual Event*

Just wanted to take a minute and say thank you for your presentation yesterday. I have had numerous people stop me and tell me how much they loved your story – how your message really hit home with our transformation.

– *Cook Medical*

I wanted to thank you for your contribution to our sales meeting... your talk was the highlight of the meeting for all in attendance. It is always great for me to see an individual like yourself with an incredible resume and unique life experiences who is still incredibly humble and down to earth (pardon the pun). You fit in perfectly with our company values. The feedback we got rated higher than anything we did, and it wasn't even close. The message you delivered – the tone of never giving up, team culture, perseverance and overcoming challenges - still resonates this week in conversations.

– *Cook Vascular Programs*

Mike was great. He did a fantastic job of engaging the audience with his stories and down-to-earth style (pardon the pun). He hit the mark on our key messages, but didn't beat people over the head with them. He integrated them seamlessly into his stories. I also appreciated that he hung around and chatted with a number of our colleagues after his remarks – even if it did nearly cause him to miss his flight. All told, he was a hit.

– *CVS Caremark*

Thanks again for doing a superb job today. Really top notch. They loved you. Couldn't have asked for a better crafted talk.

– *Dynamic Speakers*

The team is still buzzing about your inspirational and engaging talk. You were a huge hit! We look forward to including you in other events at Fidelity.

– *Fidelity Investments*

You did an amazing job getting a full understanding of our company and incorporating it in your speech. Your energy, passion, humor, and connection with the audience was beyond impressive. Your message and stories resonated with our employees, many of whom went out of

their way to share with us how inspiring they thought you are, and for context, this tremendous feedback was from an audience used to hearing from exceptional people with exceptional achievements; yet you easily topped our past keynotes.

– *Imprivata*

We have gotten an incredible amount of positive feedback about your talk, and to say you 'delivered' would be a complete understatement. Thank you for helping to inspire my team to be at their best with this amazing advancement for myeloma patients...for helping Janssen Oncology to DREAM BIG and GO FAR.

– *Janssen Oncology*

I sincerely appreciate the obvious thoughtfulness and effort to incorporate all the points we discussed. I know this is going to be a big hit at the conference. I can't think of a better message to close our meeting. Thanks for putting this together so quickly on what I know was very short notice. (Pre-recorded Virtual Keynote)

– *National Council for Air and Stream Improvement*

We just wanted to say a big thank you for helping inspire our teams yesterday. All of those docs and frontline team members (and executives!) are buzzing with smiles today and repeating your stories. The messages that you deliver are very applicable to the work we do in acute healthcare.

– *Orlando Health*

Mike was really great to work with and just some amazing stories and we're bummed our clients couldn't meet him in person, but we think this is the next best thing. Many of his stories are very topical to what we are all going through right now including the quarantine astronauts go through before going into space and the isolation even in space being disconnected from the world. The story of teamwork with his fellow astronaut classmates was especially powerful for me. A great reminder that we're all in this together right now. And I enjoyed his story about needing to both accept change and anticipate change in the same moment. Really powerful! Please thank him for us.

– *Personify Software Virtual Event*

Our leaders were inspired by your story and I believe walked away with a renewed sense of purpose and ready to focus on our new aspiration and goal. Your determination has encouraged us to think differently and be more courageous in our pursuits to impact society.

– *Pfizer*

As anticipated, you delivered a talk that was spot on! The comments have all been on how relevant your content was to our business. Thanks for your prep and tremendous message!

– *Terumo Aortic Virtual Event*

On behalf of the entire marketing leadership team THANK YOU! Your talk was incredibly powerful and inspiring! We have heard so many positive comments. It gave a lot of meaning to the seminar and I know people will continue using your stories and quotes for a long time!

– *The LEGO Group*

OMG – he was awesome! Everyone loved him!! He stayed to sign books and I think all 300 people waited in line to have him do so. Mike is so genuine and so personable. He is truly fabulous. We'll certainly recommend him to other groups within UnitedHealth Group. We couldn't have had a better motivator for our team.

– *United Healthcare*

Your presentation was fantastic and highly rated by our audience. On behalf of USA Rice, and the more than 750 conference attendees, please accept our warmest appreciation for your contribution to the quality and success of the meeting.

– *USA Rice*

Mike was a hit and made everyone's day. His presentation was really well done and set a great, positive and fun tone for our event. He was an absolute pleasure to work with. Everyone loved him and his keynote was stellar. We absolutely loved having him at Zoomtopia.

– *Zoom*

We can't thank you enough for your inspiring kick off presentation. You set just the right tone for our meeting and inspired our guests to create innovative approaches to solving some of our thorniest business issues. The meeting was a rousing success and you played a big part teeing it up.

– *Zurich North America*

Select Client Feedback

Thank you for the most relevant and spellbinding keynote speech I have ever seen. You've inspired everyone today with your determination and life lessons.

– **Mark Wallace** *Cority*

Your session today was phenomenal, and I am so happy with the presentation. Everyone (attendees, the Cority team) is still talking about it. Thank you so much for an amazing keynote! The best one we've ever had by far!!

– **Erin Hanson** *Cority*