

## Martian Crew

written by Alex Moore on July 26, 2000

In the first decade after NASA launched the space program, the selection of astronauts was extremely limited. Only expert male pilots or scientists with piloting experience were chosen. These missions lasted a very short time, often only days, and the crew returned home. On Mars everything will be different.

When choosing a crew to colonize Mars - people who will live there for the rest of their lives - we must be very careful. A mischievous leader or stubborn idealist could lead to the downfall of the entire space mission. There are certain psychological traits that should be included as well as those that should be excluded to avoid such catastrophe.

First of all, women are a very important inclusion to the Mars Mission. On a mission that will last a lifetime, an all male crew would obviously not function. An even split between men and women seems the most logical solution to this problem. But what about the relationships that are sure to develop. In an enclosed sociological system, several men and women would surely be left out.

This enclosed system is what behavioral scientists call a "box". Smaller groups develop and affect the other members of the crew who in turn must adjust to fit the new specifications. Perhaps this is best illustrated in the 20-20 model. If twenty men and twenty women were sent to Mars, and fifteen couples formed by the end of the trip, 5 men and 5 women would remain. This is in essence natural selection, survival of the fittest. But these 10 people still form 25% of the crew, and are more likely to be irritable and depressed. The entire colony is affected and changes again.

This claustrophobic atmosphere will have many negative psychological effects on the crew. To avoid this, social scientists urge for artificial gravity rings to be built around the entire ship. Also, they hope the construction of large personal quarters and recreational facilities will decrease depression over the nine month trip. Of course, none of this will be of any use if the crew is not psychologically stable in the first place.

Another point to take into consideration is accepting people from different nationalities. Since this will be a worldwide mission the crew will consist of people from many countries. This could cause friction between the national majority, probably the United States, and other countries. In the worst case scenario, disagreements could take place in the form of verbal or physical fighting. But having a mixed ethnic group would release the tension of having the same nationality always together. The crew would accept each other as human beings and not as citizens of different nations. This will help the Mars self-government in the long run.

If the first crew to travel to Mars met all the expectations we asked, they would not be human. Taking this into consideration, I've developed a brief but realistic set of criteria:

**PERSONAL:**

1. Age 28 - 50
2. Not married or in a current relationship
3. 90% passing grade in personal values

**EXPERIENCE:**

1. 1 year in Antarctic Confinement dome
2. 2 years MIT
3. 10 years experience in

**EDUCATION:**

1. Masters Degree or equivalent in specialized field
2. 2 years in Mars education program
3. Ability to speak

**PSYCHOLOGICAL:**

1. 96% passing grade in intelligence test
2. 96% passing grade in confinement test
3. Passed single month mental