

You know the old adage: "If we could just harness this energy, we could light up all of Manhattan." There couldn't be a more appropriate image to describe Buzz Aldrin, the famous moon-walking astronaut of Apollo 11 and co-author of the new epic space saga, "Encounter with Tiber."

It's not that his voice was frenetic, or that the questions sent him into a whirlwind of disorganized thoughts and ideas. Actually, he was methodical ... thoughtful with his responses. No, it was more the fact that he refused to focus on the past.



Buzz Aldrin, 1984

He would not be tied down for even a moment. This intense man just kept plunging headlong into the future.

Case in point: When asked, "What is your favorite destination?" Aldrin responds, "I keep becoming attracted to the deep. My next dive is really going to be a treat." A treat for Aldrin, an adventure of a lifetime for most others. He is participating in an expedition to recover portions of the Titanic for the establishment of a memorial museum. Aldrin will be taking a cool 13,000-foot submarine dive into the deep ... as a treat!

But how about that favorite trip you've taken? "It would have to be

grabbed a hose and carried a rock underwater in the lake. It didn't work, you know. You have to be closer to the surface."

Most probably wouldn't know, or even have bothered to find out. But then, that's why he made it to the moon.

Actually, Aldrin's

curiosity and love of the deep really did pay off when his formal schooling led him to be the first astronaut to train underwater for space walking, bringing him one step closer to the Apollo 11 mission.

But back to the mission at hand: favorite past travel experiences. The obvious choice might persuade Aldrin to commit. If he were asked about his favorite space destination, it would have to

reaching a difficult destination – the process – is as important as the place itself. Once it's been done, he moves on.

Aldrin makes this infinitely clear when he summarizes his current life mission and how it is intricately tied to travel.

"I would like very much," he says, "to create an awareness of a need for our society to recognize a meaningful, inspiring objective we can prepare for and internationally execute."

Mars?

"Yes. I think that kind of long-term objective of initiating and seeing it

flourish permanently will be of such great inspiration to the people here on Earth. And we should realize it's not the things we will bring back, that we will find on Mars, but it is the execution that will be of great value and service to us here back on Earth." Aldrin makes

a great point. Is there anyone who doesn't remember what he or she was doing when Apollo 11 successfully landed on the moon? What we all took away with us during that heroic endeavor was not so much the information, but the magic of sharing in a wonderful moment. That one moment of a destination reached. The future realized. A human value.

No wonder a man who has reached the ultimate travel destination continues to focus on the future. And he fully expects the same of every worldly traveler.

"You know," he says, "it won't be the government, the astronauts or the scientists that will make civilian space travel happen. The travel industry will be the industry that opens up space. It will be the ordinary citizens that want to share that experience, who will make it happen."

A tall order from a true visionary. But plausible ... and inspirational, like Aldrin in his quest for a future full of travel possibilities.

ADRIENNE PARKER FOLEY

"I got the idea from the Prince Valiant comic strip when he avoided his pursuers by concealing himself underwater in a swamp using a straw to breathe."

underwater destinations that I haven't visited yet," he responds, "but do exist, I know, in the South Pacific. Indonesia. Palered – I've tried to get there many times."

Does this man ever look back? A little tactical maneuver was obviously necessary to get him to divulge a *past* travel experience. "When did you first become interested in diving?"

"In 1957, while I was based in Germany as a West Pointer." He pauses. "I take that back. It was when I was 11 or 12 years old, at a summer camp in Maine. I got the idea from the Prince Valiant comic strip when he avoided his pursuers by concealing himself underwater in a swamp using a straw to breathe. So, I gave it a try. I

be ... it's just got to be ...

"The moons of Mars," he says, still refusing to discuss the past. "To travel on an object with very low gravity, to sort of really bounce around from one spot to another and look down on a gorgeous, red planet with dust storms, gigantic canyons, mountains five times higher than they are here on Earth, and watch a new civilization set foot and flourish and grow. That would be the epitome of travel for me." He pauses and adds, "I enjoy travel planning."

Aaah! A key to this complex, brilliant man. It's clear now what Aldrin has been saying. Planning and



TO THE MOON