



KATIE O'GRADY



Chronic Illness Speaker · Identity, Resilience, Performance

I live with cystic fibrosis, a life-threatening disease that affects my lungs and requires daily treatment. I never saw myself as sick – I saw myself as normal, and spent years protecting that belief before I had any proof to back it up. Running became the proof. Now I speak on what it takes to build an identity that holds, and coach runners managing chronic illness the way I wish I'd been coached.

The Talk

"Choose Your Lead"

On identity, discipline, and who gets to decide who you are. This talk is about what it actually takes to protect an identity before you have any proof it's true, what happens when protecting it turns into having to prove it, and what it looks like to finally work with your body instead of against it. Built around cystic fibrosis and running – but the question underneath applies to anyone in the room: who decided who you are, and are you the one still writing it?

What I Bring

- A powerful, relatable story of living with chronic illness without being defined by it
- A clear framework: identity → behavior → outcomes
- A performance-driven mindset that applies beyond running
- Honest, grounded storytelling – not motivation hype

Credentials

- Speaking since 2015 – Saint Thomas Aquinas College Tribute Dinner
- Featured runner, 26.2 Miles Apart (dir. Chris DeSanty) – debuted at NACFC
- 2023 American Thoracic Society Patient Speaker
- 2024–2026 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Disney Marathon Team Coach
- 2025 Healthgrades Asthma Awareness Partnership
- 2021 Healthline & Lung Association Partnership

Contact

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