



Keynote Description

Signature Keynote

Sustaining High Performance Without Burnout

How to Thrive in High-Pressure Environments

Every person carries a challenge that others cannot see. Some trials are temporary. Some are seasonal. Some are enduring.

The problem is that many people treat every challenge the same way, exhausting themselves trying to solve what must simply be endured, or giving permanent power to problems that were only meant to be temporary.

In this powerful and deeply personal keynote, cancer survivor, oncology social worker, and resilience expert Rashad Hayes shares how life's most difficult moments can either deplete our capacity or develop our character. Through powerful storytelling, practical strategies, and his signature CAKE Framework, attendees will learn how to navigate adversity without sacrificing their well-being, authenticity, or sense of purpose.

Using lessons learned from childhood memories in his grandmother's kitchen and his own journey living with an incurable cancer diagnosis, Rashad teaches audiences how to identify the trials they face, protect their capacity, and continue rising without burning out.

Because the goal isn't to avoid the heat.

The goal is to grow through it without losing yourself in the process.



Keynote

Culture Shift, Not Just Motivation: *Building Sustainable Systems for Burnout Prevention and High-Stakes Decision Making*

Burnout is not a motivation problem; it is a systems problem. In high-pressure environments like courts, child welfare, education, healthcare, and leadership spaces, professionals are often expected to produce at high levels without the restoration needed to sustain that performance. The result is emotional exhaustion, decision fatigue, disengagement, and high turnover that impacts both people and outcomes. In this powerful keynote, speaker, author, and social worker Rashad Hayes challenges the traditional conversation around burnout and introduces a more effective approach: culture shift over temporary motivation. Through his signature Don't Burn Your Cake® Framework and the CAKE Method, Rashad helps leaders and teams understand how burnout develops, how "prove mode" keeps professionals trapped in overfunctioning, and how intentional systems can restore clarity, capacity, and long-term performance. This keynote moves beyond inspiration and into practical transformation by helping organizations identify what their culture is reinforcing daily and how to create environments where people can perform without constantly operating on empty.

The message is simple: Pressure is inevitable. Burnout is not. Organizations do not need more motivated people. They need systems that help people last.