



Motivational speaker **Maja Kazazic** grew up in Bosnia as the Bosnian War was raging in Mostar in the early 1990s. The citizens of Mostar had managed the best they could; foraging for food, hauling water from the river and helping each other get through dark nights filled with gunfire. As though living with a war being fought outside her front door wasn't challenge enough, Maja's life changed forever in the summer of 1993. A mortar shell fell in her courtyard, critically injuring her and killing six of her friends.

Her legs were shattered, her face and arm were peppered with shrapnel. Cared for in a makeshift basement hospital, her left leg was eventually amputated below the knee without benefit of anesthesia. Without proper medication, her other injuries, including the massive injuries to her right leg festered in the mid-summer heat. She lay close to death when she was selected to be one of three children evacuated to Croatia, then Germany and eventually, to the United States.

One year later, as a resident of a small Maryland town, Maja taught herself English and enrolled herself in high school, determined to pick up the remnants of her shattered life. In rapid succession she joined the marching band, put herself through college and now runs a successful web development company. In the process, she has also learned to windsurf and to play tennis and golf, despite the obvious challenges these pastimes present to a below-the-knee amputee.

Maja travels the country telling her story in a simple, compelling way. She is a living testament to the resiliency of the human spirit and the value of determination and tenacity. Maja's audiences are often inspired to share their own stories of triumph and success in the face of adversity.

**Maja Kazazic**

### Speech Topics

- Personal Growth
- Overcoming Adversity
- Motivation
- Inspiration

