

## Nicole Malachowski

First Woman Thunderbird Pilot, Combat Veteran, Fighter Squadron Commander

**Harnessing Headwinds of Change.** In flying, headwinds slow you down. At their worst, they cause you to change your plans and impact the effectiveness of weapons in combat. Headwinds demand that pilots be resilient and resourceful, literally on the fly. “Headwinds are the perfect metaphor for the change impacting organizations and individuals today,” says 21-year Air Force veteran Nicole Malachowski. A former fighter squadron commander and mission-ready pilot in three operational fighter squadrons and the first woman to fly on the Air Force Thunderbirds, Nicole has the perfect message to inspire audiences to think differently about the headwinds of change they face—organizationally and personally. Drawing on her extraordinary Air Force career, Nicole offers lessons on leadership, followership, and overcoming adversity. She weaves storytelling with breathtaking video from the cockpit of her jet as the Thunderbirds execute precision turns, rolls, and loops—all just 36” from one another at 400 mph and just 300 feet off the ground. Nicole’s keynote helps audiences ignite their own indomitable spirit in order to succeed far beyond what they might dream. “Failure isn’t fatal,” she says, “it’s the price of entry if you want to achieve something great.”

**Pushing The Envelope: Being The Best When It Counts.** What does it take to be the best? The individuals and teams who achieve at the highest levels have one thing in common: they push the envelope and go to the edge of boundaries. They accomplish as much as possible and do it to a standard of excellence. Pushing the envelope is an aviation term for taking an aircraft to the maximum limits of its abilities. In the business world, pushing the envelope means knowing yourself—certainly knowing your limits—all while using every bit of your ability to maximize your performance, be your best and be consistent. As a combat-tested fighter pilot and a member of the military’s most elite group of aviators (1 in 2,000 USAF pilots become Thunderbird pilots), Nicole Malachowski inspires audiences with lessons learned from a distinguished 21-year career—giving them the courage to push the envelope in their own lives. That means using inevitable failures to launch to the next level...preparing for turbulence, because change is unrelenting, and it is hard, but you must anticipate it...trusting in teammates’ skill and precision, while developing your own...and being mindful of the over-control that leads to performance malfunctions and mutes achievement. Nicole’s presentation provides an unforgettable and practical roadmap for individuals and organizations looking to make the most of their talents and efforts.

**Breaking Barriers: Conquering Self-Doubt & Cultural Paradigms.** Every great accomplishment involves breaking barriers—both culturally and within. Nicole Malachowski is a trailblazer who succeeded in a traditionally male-dominated career field: the world of the fighter pilot. As uncomfortable and risky as stretching the limits of yourself and your surroundings might be, Nicole tells audiences there’s no reason to allow that to dictate your goals and aspirations. She became one of the first women to fly a modern-day fighter aircraft, the very first woman to fly with the Air Force Thunderbird aerial demonstration team, and she was inducted into the Women in Aviation International Pioneer Hall of Fame. She is relatable to women and men with a fascinating narrative of exactly what it took to be a woman vanguard and break tradition. Nicole offers actionable tools and real-world lessons about pursuing her dream, making choices, all while building a family and achieving success in a career where few women had gone before. Nicole inspires audiences with a message rooted in her personal mantra—“Nobody wants to lead a scripted life.”