

Dennie Doyle

The LCAE Acceptance Speech
On Behalf Of Nominees, 2016

In 1973 Malcolm Knowles wrote a scholarly book with the title, *The Adult Learner, A Forgotten Species*. From the title alone, clearly Mr Knowles didn't get the memo that The London Council for Adult Education was way ahead of the game when they established their committee in 1945.

I'm Dennie Doyle and deeply honoured to be sharing this moment with you, my fellow nominees, our presenters and The London Council for Adult Learners. The LCAE has made it their mission to ensure that as adult learners we are NOT the forgotten species. Instead they promote lifelong learning and are committed to providing dignity and opportunities for all adult learners no matter what challenges we face.

The delicate balance of school life and home life is basically non-existent when you become a student. No such thing as free time. For many of us time away from family and friends was a painful but in the end the rewards were truly worthwhile. Reflecting back on my own journey, I'm reminded the time spent with peers and my tutor helping me write those dreaded thesis statements was a bonding experience that I will cherish for life. I no longer view learning as challenge to be fearful of but rather something to embrace every chance I get. I've gone from experiencing fear to experiencing a sense of accomplishment. Like many of my fellow honourees, returning to school as an adult learner, came with its own set of unique challenges. All of us sitting here on this stage faced our fears, faced some of life's most difficult challenges in our pursuit of lifelong learning.

What many of us don't realize is The London Council for Adult Learners also champions for grieving parents, like myself, discussing with great sensitivity and respect how our unique challenges can be met. Attending classes while I was in the psychiatric hospital desperately trying to deal with the tragic loss of my son is something most of us can't comprehend. For me, the idea that it was even possible for me to attend class was beyond my scope of vision. But yet there I was, grieve stricken, still grieve stricken and yet able to complete my education as originally planned.

The Adult learner honouree experience has given me a sense of purpose and focus. Stories like those of my fellow nominees inspire and give reason why we should and why we must continue to challenge ourselves. The hard work of the committee is evident by the success stories you've heard tonight. Having The London council for adult education take notice that we are all equally worthy of respect has cultivated a community of adult learners that are advocates for and sensitive to the needs of others.

In Buddhism, it is said that to be born as a human being is the biggest blessing of all. For in human form, we can do amazing things. **You** are capable of doing wonders. Tonight's event and the gracious people at The London Council for Adult Education are proof that we are not a forgotten species, that **we** are all capable of doing wonders. Honour the precious gift you've been given and continue on your journey of lifelong learning.