



Talk Learn Connect

with Yvonne Reddin



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Writer Yvonne Reddin asked TD Jennifer Carroll MacNeill to share some TLC (Talk Learn Connect)

Did you always know from your secondary/third level school years that you would go down the path of politics or did something/someone decide that path for you?



I have always been very interested in current affairs which, I think, came from my mum who is keenly interested in politics, and was a big fan of Garret Fitzgerald. I studied politics in College and went on to qualify as a solicitor. I then worked in government for several years and went on to complete further studies in political science. All that being said, I had never actually planned on becoming a politician myself.

The idea of putting myself forward for election hadn't occurred to me until I was asked by Fine Gael to run in the local election.

You have a range of occupations already including author, barrister, policy advisor and now TD, is there another vocation that you would like to add to your list of achievements?

I am privileged to have been elected as a TD, and I hope that I'll have this position for as long as the good people of Dun-Laoghaire afford me the opportunity to do so.

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The pandemic came out of nowhere and people were shocked by its ability to stop the economy and the human race globally in its tracks. How has this affected your professional/personal life in general as it can also have the positive affect of being at home with your family?

As is the case for people across the country, and around the world, Covid 19 has had an impact on my professional and personal life. It has certainly been a strange time to begin a new role, bringing both challenges and opportunities. As a public representative, meeting people face to face is a huge part of how I do my job. The opportunities to do this now are obviously extremely limited which means I've had to find ways to work around this. My reliance on video conferencing platforms for everything from team meetings to online clinics has hugely increased.

A positive that we can take away from our current situation is the fact that we have shown that working remotely, in many cases, is possible and sometimes more convenient. Personally, I have found that I am now able to attend meetings held during the evening as I can do so from my own home. This is a huge benefit for me as the mother of a young child

“I hope that the option of attending meetings and events online will remain once things begin to return to normal, offering us all a bit more flexibility and convenience”

Like everybody else that is working from home with young children, I am doing my best with what can be, at times, a challenging situation. While it's wonderful to have more time at home to spend with my son, juggling childcare duties while remaining productive and efficient can often be difficult. In saying this, I am mindful of all those who are working on the frontlines and the vital work that they do in order for us to be able to stay at home and keep safe.

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You are a passionate advocate for Women's Aid and have also worked with Coercive Control. This is an exposed time for people who are at home scared and a huge area of concern. Will you consider other ways vulnerable people can be supported if this type of lockdown happens again in the future?

There are a range of vulnerable people that the current restrictions have had a particularly significant impact on. I am thinking in particular of children with additional needs that have faced severe disruption to their routines, as well as children and adults that rely on ongoing care and therapy. I have been appointed to the Special Dáil Committee on Covid-19 and will be raising all of these issues as I look to find practical solutions to help these individuals as early as can be done safely.

Can you share any words of wisdom that helped you in your successful career?

I think that the simplest advice is often the best. Find something that you're truly interested in and work extremely hard; it will take you a long way.



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