



**PYS#29: Women On The Move:  
VidaDIY and the CondoPlantMama**

# Transcript

**Heike:** Welcome everybody, and hi to Davida Freeman on The Pursue Your Spark podcast. She is the creator and originator of Vida DIY and The Condo Plant Mama. She turned her passion into a business, and I want to say too, we're making a video with the audio today. So for those of you who want to see some of her crafts and the magical work that she does, we'll put the link in the show notes so you can see what she actually has created.

**Heike:** She is the lover and creative maker of all things DIY, crafty, crazy, and cool. So, welcome to the show, V., as we all call her and tell us about yourself.

**Davida:** Hey everybody. Well, I'm V. It's short for Davida, and I started a venture called VidaDIY some years ago. I started, actually in 2010 with a project that I did for my mother for her 60th birthday party, so I had lots of fun putting together custom invitations and thank you cards.

**V:** I didn't really get very serious into it until maybe two or three years ago when I started doing projects in the condo. That's where I'm doing the podcast and videocast from now. We redid the bathroom and the kitchen, and we did some small projects, and I was just inspired to bring some of my creative flair to this space.

**Heike:** Some of those things I see on Instagram, and that's why I'm always excited to see your posts, to see what she created next. But, in your real life, what do you do in your real life when you're not crafting?

**V:** I go crazy trying to support technology in different school sites. So, I work for a company that does consulting work for some clients in the DMV area, and my specialty has been supporting and providing technology services for private independent schools in the area. So, I support upwards of about eight different schools, and I rotate through various sites. You'll find a lot of my Vida DIY touches at every site that I go to as well.

**Heike:** I've seen some of those magical decorations or transformations of spaces, on Instagram. We'll put a link in the show notes so you can find out where you can find V. It's just amazing what you do with those spaces and turn them into something a lot more fun and diverse and magical.

**V:** Absolutely, and that's one of the key reasons I do it because it's a tech space, I want people to see that you can do amazing things with any area that you're living out of or working from and this one of the reasons why I do this. It makes me smile, it makes me happy, and when it comes to a technical support office, it can be a very clinical, technical and stressful place for many people. When they enter that space, they have some sort of a technology issue or problem. So one of the key reasons why I like to transform spaces with my VidaDIY projects is so that it puts people off guard in a good way and they look at the area and they're just so utterly charmed by it, it makes them smile, and that's one of the key reasons why I do it.

**Heike:** Now, we also have not met through your crafty side of life, because I am definitely not a crafty, decorative person and I'm the super minimalist, and bare walls are just my happy place. We met through running, and you shared with me that your medals are not on a hanger made by, and designed by you.

**V:** I was for many years. I did a lot of races too. I did about 15 full marathons. Two of those were Boston. Oh, man, the best time in the world. If you're gonna run a marathon and be on your feet for 26.2 miles, Boston is the place to do it. I've lost count of the half marathons. A lot of shorter distance races, but I was so privileged and happy that I was able to get to know you through our training days. I think it was 2011, 2012, that we were a part of a marathon training group in the winter and we had the best time.

I was training for London, and we were in the same pace group, so it was great to get to know you then because you're so much fun to just pace with. You just kept everybody laughing and happy and smiling, so that was a great time.

**Heike:** That's my role as a coach, not only do I give sound training advice, but I want people to have fun. What good is it if you do something and you're dreading it. It's hard enough to be out in the winter and running.

**V:** I hadn't been running in a while, and I decided to start up with the activity again. I'm gonna start on Tuesday. I put together a small group of people that work with at one of my school sites, and we just talked about taking advantage of this beautiful track that they have on campus, and we start running and walking on Tuesday. It's gonna be hot, so I will do whatever I can to make it fun for everybody because I'm going to be the group leader.

**Heike:** Oh, that's so much fun. Good job. Awesome. Motivating people to get their buttskies, as I call them, in gear.

**V:** My ulterior motive is to get people to do it with me. It's one of the things I miss the most about the running group was just having that comradery and that company. Even though you can go out and get moving at any time, especially when it's an activity like walking or running, there's nothing like having a group to do it with you and to support you, so I look forward to that.

**Heike:** I can't wait to hear the stories you're sharing when you're out there with your group. Love it. Now, you said, we know the reason why you started you do it yourself venture, but you also have your mom involved with this.

**V:** Yes. I am so fortunate to have her along with me on this journey. She's coming to visit in a few weeks to help me with the DC state fair, I have a booth there on September 23rd. But, she's also agreed to help me do research and to help keep up with my website and my social

media accounts. She's retired, and she has all of this energy and vibrancy, and she's just so very eager to help in whatever way she can.

**Heike:** You opened an Etsy store, as your business is exploding. But you also do what do you call, Friends, Friendly Projects, I think that's how you called it. Friend, Friendly Projects. I don't know what that means, do they get it for free?

**V:** Yes. I do a lot of projects for friends as well because as I share, the projects that I complete or projects in progress, people have reached out to me asking if I can help them with a project, whether it's a do it yourself, or they would like to have something that has that handmade, handcrafted flair, so actually right before the interview, I just got back from a business transaction with a friend of mine. She was looking for something special for her wedding, so she asked me to do three projects for her.

**Heike:** Hold on, because I want everybody to know how this happened. I am preparing for the interview, and the first picture I get on Instagram from V is like, a jar and then the second is something else, and the third is, look at the line on the checkout, wherever she was, and I'm like, girlfriend, we have an interview. She's like yeah, but I'm crafting something right now.

**V:** That's just part of my world. That's part of the whole VidaDIY experience, you know, often times I just take off and then if you're lucky, I'm standing in one spot usually in the kitchen or at my project table, just engrossed in a project. But as people learn more about what I do, they've reached out to me asking if I can do projects for them as well. So, you know, that part of the venture is taking off as well where one of the key things I love about it is that it's just, it's springing from people's minds, from their vision, from their ideas. It's not something that I'm selling to them. It's not something that I'm creating and then seeing if that's something that they'd like to have. It's just something that is just birthed in their minds, and then they're telling me, this is what I envision, can you help me make it a reality?

**Heike:** Give me an example of some of that, because that was my next question. Give us an example of what that might be that somebody like today comes in and says I need.

**V:** So for example, my friend Sonya, who I just saw, she wanted a guestbook, and she couldn't find any guestbooks for her wedding that really suited her style, that spoke to her, that seemed like her type of, a book that she'd have. So, she reached out to me and asked me if I would make her one and collaborating with her. She gave me the silhouette of the bride and groom, and it was a very personal type of image for her because she spent some time looking for the perfect shape for her cake topper. Once she found it, it was something that she had invested a lot of time and energy into finding the perfect one, so that kind of made it easy for me. If you give me the image of the silhouette, then that's going to be the branding for all the projects that I do for you. So, she and the groom are delighted with what I put together for them because it's something that was very personal for

them. It's something that meant something special for them because it was something that they have identified as suiting their style.

**Heike:** Your projects vary significantly from more funky type things to a little bit more traditional, and you also work with a ton of different materials. So, do you take over the kitchen to do all those projects?

**V:** You should see the kitchen now. It looks like two bombs hit it, it's a mess. But yes. I love working with lots of different materials because I like the texture, I like the textures, I like the multi-dimensional effects. It just kind of speaks to me, so my favorite elements to work with are wood and paper.

**Heike:** So again, let me refer back. Guys, you gotta see the video because you can't see what she's pointing at behind her. Describe what you're holding.

**V:** Okay, so this is actually a tent. It's like a tent display of an octopus that I created, and if you use magnets, I like to use different types of materials and tools to kind of transform an item so that you can use it for many different things. So, if you use a magnet, you can hang signs on it, so it's kind of like a desk accessory. But, this is an example of how I love the natural look and texture of wood, but I like to enhance it by you know, just funkifying it if you will.

**Heike:** The octopus is carved it looks like out of gold and somehow added to, or glued on. The listener can visualize what it's like, and then you turn it around and on the backside is another piece of metal I would assume, right? It has a saying on there.

**V:** Yes, it says, enjoy the little things.

**Heike:** It's beautiful.

**V:** So, those are amongst my favorite projects, taking a single object and then coming up with several different uses for it. So, part of the reason why I like doing that is that it just kind of challenges my own creativity to come up with different ways that you can use the same item. All of this is done in a condo space, we actually live and work out of a one bedroom condo, so it's also space saving as well. I'm one of the people who, I just geek out over tiny houses, and you know, those type of spaces and projects and I'm always coming up with ways in which you could create really cool things that are also functional because it enhances a tiny space.

**Heike:** Let's move onto the CondoPlantMama, and if you go on Instagram, you will see V's balcony. It is a jungle of green plants, and I don't have a green thumb, and she actually made a video showing me that even I could grow something with my not so green thumbs. So, how does the CondoPlantMama tie in with DIY?

**V:** Well, with Condo Plant Mama, it's part of my way of sending out the message that you can have green living things in your space as well, and you can take care of them. It's a journey. It's a process, especially if you're not accustomed to having plants in your space or caring for plants, but it's a very worthwhile one. I find that along with doing it yourself, having plants in your space and watching them thrive and grow, it's very empowering and it's something that brings that wholesomeness into your space.

It's something that I wanted to encourage more of my friends and followers to think about and to embrace the idea. Because a lot of times, I get feedback from people when they see plants in my space that they could never care for plants, that they would only kill plants.

**Heike:** I'm raising my hand.

**V:** Yes, and I totally feel you. I understand where you're coming from because I used to think that as well and this is my way of showing people that I've gone through this journey. I've gone through this process of bringing plants into my space and learning what they need, learning how to best care for them, learning the whole process of letting go if a plant is not going to make it in your space. So, I want to share that with people as I go through that journey.

Now, I've decided to create an Instagram account for it. So, with VidaDIY, I have a website, an Etsy site, I've been sharing a lot of stuff on Facebook as well with VidaDIY. With CondoPlantMama, it's primarily an Instagram account that I've created a separate account so that I can showcase my love for plants and share little tips along the way.

**Heike:** Yeah. So, for somebody who wanted to start out their own DIY, and they have ideas, what would you say they, where should they start?

**V:** YouTube.

**Heike:** Are you on YouTube?

**V:** I do have a YouTube channel. There's not much on there yet, but people are just so very generous with sharing what they know, especially when it comes to DIY on YouTube. I've learned a lot of cool things. Like this shelf here, I built this. Yes.

**Heike:** You guys definitely have to see the video because I'm looking at it right now, I'm like holy cow.

**V:** Yes, yes, this is what I have floating shelves all over the place. I've built furniture. I've learned lots of different tips on how to just do fancy invitations and cards and how to add those embellishments. A lot of what I've picked up on with my DIY, I've learned from YouTube and then I would just start having different ideas on how to put my own personal spin or touch on a particular project and I would just go for it. I would say that that's one of the best things that you can do if you're interested in getting more into DIY.

**V:** If you have an idea, if you have a vision for your space or for a solution, try something out and then see how far you can take it and if you run into pitfalls along the way, there are plenty of people out there with a lot of information that will help you along the way.

**Heike:** What are some of the obstacles that you came across that you had to overcome on your VIDADIY journey?

**V:** Oh, time is one of the biggest ones because it is a time-consuming hobby and venture if you will. One of their reasons why I make it work is because I enjoy it so much. It's just been an essential outlet for me. But, there's a lot of time that goes into it and finding the time can be a challenge.

Also, staying organized, that's a big thing. I need to revisit your decluttering podcast to learn more about what I can do, but it's kinda hard when you are a creator, and you create things with different elements and different material because you need to have those materials around you while you're creating. So, keeping things organized and decluttered is a constant challenge for me and just basically, coming up with ideas has become less and less of a challenge.

At first, I would be stumped with okay, I've done this project, what next and wouldn't come up with a cool idea and as people will see with my Instagram account, I rarely post the same thing twice. A lot of times when I post a project, it's something very different than what I've done before.

**V:** But, as time has gone on and as I've continued to do these projects under VidaDIY and CondoPlantMama, I find that the ideas are coming to me more and more, which also becomes a challenge and other crafters and creators, they can definitely vouch for this. As you are working with different projects, an idea for another project starts popping into your mind, and then you're beginning to juggle projects. You have all these different things that you're working on and things that you want to get to, and sometimes it's tough to complete something because you put it down, you pick up something else, so that's a constant challenge.

**V:** I would say that those three.

**Heike:** Yeah, these are good heads up for the creators. I know you're married, so how does your husband feel about his new condo and his new balcony growing and greening?

**V:** I'm not married. We live together.

**V:** He's been incredibly supportive. There are zones in the condo where he has made it clear to me that he would like that to be sacred and VidaDIY craft free. I do what I can to honor that, a lot of times I push that envelope.

He knows how important this is to me. Like, he was very supportive when I was out doing all this crazy running. He continues to be supportive of the pursuits that I choose to go after, so you know, he's been great.

**Heike:** That's awesome. I think you couldn't, we all couldn't wish for anything better than having a supportive partner in all of our ventures. That goes both ways, that's an integral part in achieving the goals that we all set for ourselves, whether it's crafting, running, weight loss, changing something in your life.

It seems you are changing your life as it to be moving away from IT a little bit more into your VidaDIY and CondoPlantMama as a new business venture. At least that's how I see it, so where do you see the future of Vida DIY and CondoPlantMama going from there?

**V:** Actually, as time has gone on, it's become more and more evident that the track that I'm on now, the direction I'm going, actually I've gotten myself on this path by the encouragement of others. I envision myself doing something very different with this. I started a blog a few years ago called Condocrfting.com, and I was primarily focused on sharing what I do with my projects through step by step tutorials, and that's something that I want to get back to. I want to continue to develop that content, and I'm thinking about maybe putting together some products, some e-books that will allow me to share the details of how I do these projects with those that follow me and really like what I've been sharing.

Now, I see myself just focusing more on the aspect of helping people to identify solutions that they would like to have in their lives and in their spaces that is more crafty and creative. I would like to at some point work with people directly to offer classes, so that's something that I'm going to pursue as well and the more I venture down this path, the more I see a clear route for me to take regarding where I want to take this in the future.

I do see myself just investing a lot more time into developing this as an enterprise. So, I'm really, really looking forward to all the opportunities and challenges that are going to come my way.

**Heike:** That sounds so exciting. I think you're onto something with your venture and how it has evolved; I thought: "She's on to something." So, how can people find you?

**V:** Yes. So, my account name is Jazztique, it's J-A-Z-Z-T-I-Q-U-E. You can also find me on Instagram under VidaDIY Home, and CondoPlantMama is my third Instagram account, and people can find me on my website. It's Condocrfting.com.

**Heike:** How about Etsy?

**V:** Etsy, yes, if you look for me, my Etsy shop is called Jazztique and VidaDIYHome.



**Heike:** Okay. We're putting all these links in the show notes, so you guys know exactly how to spell all this. But, Vida mentioned earlier in the podcast that you can see her live when and where?

**V:** Oh, you can see me at the DC state fair. I'm partnering up with an organization called Network Teams, so we have a booth that we're working together, and it's going to be down at the Georgetown Waterfront on Sunday, September 23rd. (Please check out V's link as the podcast aired after the fair)

**Heike:** Awesome. It was so awesome that you shared all your knowledge and I finally get to see all the crafts in your condo, and if you guys want to look at them too, go to YouTube video. All the links that we mentioned today are in the show notes. Get in contact with V, and let us know if you purchase anything and post it on social media, so we know that you love what she creates. Thanks for being here today, it was so wonderful to have on the Pursue Your Spark podcast, V.

**V:** Thank you, Heike. This was great. This was so much fun, thanks for having me.

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