

The Zen of Red Nail Polish

by

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I practice law while also raising my mother. It is not that she really needs to be looked after, but she raised me, and we agree that it is now my turn to raise her. I also look after her friends who have no children, no children nearby, or no children anywhere that they are speaking to.

The kids call me several times a day at work with such earth-shattering questions as, "if I cannot get the dipstick back in the little hole, can I put it in the glove compartment and still drive the car?" "If you have no zucchini, can you make zucchini bread with cucumbers?" And "If you can check books out of the public library, why can't you check an animal out of the public zoo?" The latter inquiry was apparently prompted by the discovery of a great number of ants in the pantry.

Others demand more personal attention, and will lie in wait at my home, skulking in the shrubbery with a gift, such as a fresh loaf of cucumber bread.

Sleeping does not deter these people. Word is out that I am sort of a light sleeper, so they will just start talking to me as I nap. I have apparently carried on many lively conversations while in that semi-conscious state. This would explain certain invitations I would likely not have accepted if completely awake, such as Argentinian tango lessons with my 91-year old neighbor, Mr. Hooper.

I have discovered a way to gain a few moments to myself: polish my fingernails. People will leave you alone if you waggle your fingers at them in a sort of backward wave while blowing on your newly-polished nails.

And it must be a red nail polish. In desperation, I once licked my nails, intending to mimic clear polish, but learned that waggled pail fingernails deter no one.

I hope that you, too, can know the tranquility of such self-indulgent moments, when the entire focus of your universe is painting a nail in three perfect, unwavering strokes of cerise serenity. May you polish in radiant contentment.