

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE

with love from Naja x

Practice - patience - perfection



have to be honest. I've always hated the French manicure. Not so much for the look of it, but because when I embarked on my nail career, I couldn't do a good French. The nail boutique I first joined after finishing beauty school only allowed freehand French, which meant I had to draw a perfect white line with no cleaning up afterwards.

Well, I couldn't sleep for years with anxiety over the French manicure design. However, to deal with this situation I dedicated some time to furthering my skills in this department with my mentor, but alas, in those early days the practice never seemed to pay off. I just wasn't any good at French - it was extremely frustrating. So to combat this dilemma I found myself promoting bright colours or sheer polishes such as Essie's Mademoiselle.

As time has moved on I've noticed, while working alongside my three apprentices, that although they may have mastered Minx nails, have amazing reflexology skills and are moving along in the right direction with Bellissima gel overlays for natural nails (and I don't even have to report about their advanced level of nail art because they've been *Thinking Outside the Bottle* from the beginning), they are all terrible at French manicures - oops my bad! As my mum used to say when I was throwing a tantrum, 'One day when you have children I hope they act just like you'. Well, here I am, celebrity nail stylist, business owner and educator and still I avoid that fearful white line like the plague, but as I'll reveal a bit later, I may avoid it but I have now mastered it!

Teaching is a passion of mine and I'm excited to report that last month my salon, Extremedys, launched a training academy in LA and NYC, so I'm now in a position where I'm training new nail stylists 'how to' do a French manicure. It's part of the curriculum. I admit I take great pleasure in seeing someone learn a new skill while seeing their confidence soar and their larger capacity unfold as they learn and create things they never thought they were capable of.

Learning is acquiring new knowledge, behaviour or skills. And when it comes to the French manicure, I had to adopt a whole new behaviour towards it. You want to know why? Because, I was gifted when my childhood idol, Mary J Blige, became a client of mine. For the first year I worked with her she only wanted the French manicure and loves wearing the Essie combo of Blanc and Sugar Daddy. 'What a sense of humour God has', I thought. I didn't think it was at all funny at the time, but believe me when I say, I pulled out all the stops to perfect that white line!

So, whatever it is that you want to learn or you are fearful of in your work, take my advice and don't be afraid. Go for it! It takes time I admit, but if you learn the foundation and core elements from a



great source, you will be armed with the tools to practice and, as time progresses, master your new skill.

Now that I'm a master educator I have learned a very valuable secret. Practice alone does not make perfect. Far too often I see nail stylists get frustrated and give up and just move onto something else like I did in my early days with the French. My new motto is, *patience makes practice perfect*. If I didn't have patience I would have lost MJB as a client, I wouldn't be a Minx Master and there's no way I would still have my business. So anyone who doesn't know gel overlays for natural nails - get learning, get patience and get practicing. It's being requested more and more. **S**

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