I hate hate

Recently, I took one of those quizzes on Facebook that said I knew roughly 30,000 words, which is both preposterous and unverifiable.

It was probably only the second quiz I've ever taken in the seven years I've been on Facebook, mostly for those aforementioned reasons.

First, it's doubtful I actually have a vocabulary of 30,000 words. I talk and type a lot, but, c'mon, really? And how exactly would I check…carry a piece of paper around with me and make tick marks for each different word I use?

One word I know, but is not part of my vocabulary, is "hate".

Given my personal choice of creativity, crafting words, it might seem odd to skip such an evocative and emotionally charged word, but bear with me.

There are certain words I use infrequently because I feel the overuse cheapens the word. "Love" is an example of that. I don't love how comfortable my shoes are. I don't love how beautiful my kitchen is. It's sloppy shorthand speech and writing.

Hate, on the other hand, is a word that is much too often used without consideration.

"I hate my boss."; "I hate turnips."; "I hate you, Mom!"; "I hate when it rains."

You don't. Please, really, you don't. Not hate. Can't stand, maybe. Dislike, possibly. Upset or irritated, likely.

Hate is a terrible thing, not some roll-off-the-tongue

shorthand for lack of a better word. Hate is responsible for tragedies and atrocities throughout the existence of man.

Hate is an emotion so vile and virulent that no life is better for the experience. I despair for those who have truly felt hate.

Faced with hate, there is a natural response to hate in turn. Doing so darkens a person's spirit, perhaps staining it forever, depending on whether the person acts on that response.

It may sound simplistic, but when I am moved to anger, just taking the time to search for another word other than hate allows me to control my response and save myself from my own punishment, becoming like that which angers me.

I've annoyed my nieces many times by challenging them on the word hate. I don't want them to become comfortable with the word.

Words do have power. From racial slurs to derogatory insults, words have always managed to hurt people emotionally.

But hate, a word that is used more often than profanity, is insidious in that it no longer appears to have power. The history of the human condition would argue otherwise. The headlines of today reaffirm its true meaning.

Which is why you won't find it anywhere in my books. Nor is it likely you'll find it in my seven years of blog posts.

I try my best to be fair and understanding and when faced with barbaric acts, I am dismayed and mournful, but I will not let my anger change me into a reflection of that evil. I reserve my hate for one thing only.

I hate hate.