

By ANNE DONNELL

Here's a Valentine question. Why do we use the word "love" so poorly when it should be so special? Actually, you can still comment about this after Valentine's. Also, why do we say "actually" so much? LOL ("laugh out loud" and not "lots of love" as I don't know you) -Sometime s Romantic Reader

Well, this is after Valentine's and you're reading with your mouths all full of chocolate or your hearts all broken because no candy (or roses or diamonds) showed up. Or you had to PAY for candy, roses, or diamonds (hey, maybe you bought it all, big guy!)

A blog called "Askville" on Amazon skillfully handles the *actually* issue. The question being asked on "Askville" (and in a highly-charged way) is, "Is the word *actually* actually necessary? Listen for it – you'll be amazed!!! Let's fix this problem starting NOW!!!"

The response: "Who else has noticed how the word *actually* has pervaded conversations and cluttered the information we share? The resident expert on a news program will rattle off a dozen *actually's* during a two minute commentary. I suppose that's what makes him an expert. If you don't start every other sentence with *actual*

y, should I be wary of the possibility you are not credible? Or if you do, should I just be wary of the sentences in between? Perhaps if I say

actually enough, you will listen and agree without feeling the need to expend your own intellectual effort to determine the merit of what I'm telling you.

Actually is not used with evil intent, but it is overused and abused as a filler word to exude knowledgeable authority and announce, "Listen up! I speak the truth!"

Actually does all this without adding any useful information.

Saying *actually* is nothing more than announcing one's opinion of one's own opinion.

[emphasis added] I mentioned this at a party and the room went dead..."

I'd say it could run deeper; there's some societal broken trust here. Saying *actually* is a close cousin to saying

I swear I'm telling the truth, Honestly, I mean it,

and others. We know we're more than familiar with fibbing, both our own and that of others.

As to the use and abuse of *love*: I'd love to comment – oh, by the way, I love that scarf on you, and I love your car. I love those trees where you planted them, and I love your front door painted red. I love your haircut, too. I love going to the movies, and I love popcorn with butter. I love lots of butter. I love barbeque. I love pets. ETC.

No mention of God or man, but I can whittle down *love* there, too. I just love that God is love. I just love the new changes in our Sunday morning service. I just love that comedian. I just love that kid, the one with all the freckles.

It's a positive, enthusiastic word. It's not that we don't have anything else (there's always *adore* and we've "processed" it similarly.) I wonder if all that's so bad.

We seem to know we'll recognize something like a declaration of love (remember that old-fashioned term?) accompanying a marriage proposal. "I love you, Kitten" will be discernable from "I love that kitten!"

I think, *actually*, we're pretty clear on the uses of *love*, which means we're communicating well.

ONLINE DEPARTMENT "Children Are Quick" (Thanks, J. A.) • *TEACHER: Why are you late?*
STUDENT: Class started before I got here. • *TEACHER: Maria, go to the map and find North America.* *MARIA: Here it is.* *TEACHER: Correct. Now class, who discovered America?*
CLASS: Maria. • *TEACHER: John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?*
JOHN: You told me to do it without using tables. • *TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell "crocodile?"* *GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L* *TEACHER: No, that's wrong.* *GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.* • *TEACHER: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?* *DONALD: H I J K L M N O.* *TEACHER: What are you talking about?*

[I wish I'd said that a lot more often.]

DONALD: Yesterday you said it's H to O. • TEACHER: Winnie, name one important thing we have today that we didn't have ten years ago. WINNIE: Me! • TEACHER: Glen, why do you always get so dirty? GLEN: Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are. • TEACHER: Millie, give me a sentence starting with "I." MILLIE: I is. TEACHER: No, Millie. Always say, "I am." MILLIE: All right. I am the ninth letter of the alphabet. • TEACHER: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him? LOUIS: Because George still had the axe in his hand? • TEACHER: Now, Simon, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating? SIMON: No sir, I don't have to, my mom is a good cook. • TEACHER: Clyde, your composition called "My Dog" is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his? CLYDE: No, ma'am. It's the same dog. • TEACHER: Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested? HAROLD: A teacher.

[Grrrr.]

BW (Bigtime Word) *divagate* - to stray, wander, ramble. Some days I'd actually love to divagate all day. Well, perhaps that's what I've been doing writing this column.