

Views

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selves are no longer helpful or necessary? Could we get along without speaking of the “spiritual,” the “divine” or “God”?

Like “prayer” and “patriotism,” perhaps it would help to reconsider their meanings. I suspect some would resist that since we feel lost without special words to cling to, attaching our identity

and hopes to them.

I think back to sharing those communal meals with the residents. At times, difficult topics were discussed, including religion and politics. Whether or not these conversations became contentious depended on how aware a person was that others may have strong feelings or disagree. When people were conscious of the diversity of opinions and respectful of other points of view, there was often a happy outcome, even laughter. Dinners would end with everyone working together to

clear the table and clean up the dishes.

There are many words — like “community” or “cooperation” — that can raise harmony or hackles. Maybe more people need to learn the art of respectful conversation ... and help “clear the table and clean the dishes” together.

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