

Dawn Baker

Frank and I just got home from our 14 day cruise to Fiji. As we turned on the computer, we got the message from BANC that Dawn had passed away on Sunday. It's hard to comprehend that the conversation we shared 14 days ago at Blackheath's train platform was our last.

We first met Dawn at the community's free Sunday lunches at Katoomba Civic Centre. In our early encounters, she used to ignore me when I said hello. One day, I said to Frank, "I don't mind Dawn being a bit eccentric, grumpy or even scruffy at times, but I don't think she likes me at all." Then in his usual encouraging way of response, Frank replied "Oh, Dawn's okay, she's an old lady, she has her moments."

Over time, I learnt a little more about the hardship that Dawn's been through, and my feeling of rejection melted away. Gradually, Dawn responded to my greetings, and we would even have a cup of coffee together when we bumped into each other at the cafe outside Coles at Katoomba.

The last time I met Dawn was on the platform at Blackheath train station. We greeted each other and I asked her to mind my luggage while I go to get the train ticket at the machine. We carried on our conversation about various things. Then out of the blue, Dawn said to me "I like you. You always treat me the same, always nice and always say hello..." I was flattered and touched by her kind words. I felt like a little girl who just received a Gold Star!

As I reflected quietly on the train afterward, I reminded myself that each person is fighting her own uphill battle. People's resentment is not always about me or targeted at me. Disregarding how other people behave or treat me, I could only find peace in my heart when I do the right thing - make allowance for others, be kind, be true to myself, and judge not. From time to time, I may be rewarded with a surprised Gold Star like what Dawn has given me.

I'll miss hearing Dawn's "Hello Luv!", and even her whinges. I hope she rests in peace now, and free from all mortal suffering.

God bless your soul my sweet cranky old friend! Congratulations on completing your journey on this Earthly plane. You made a mark in my life, and you are remembered.