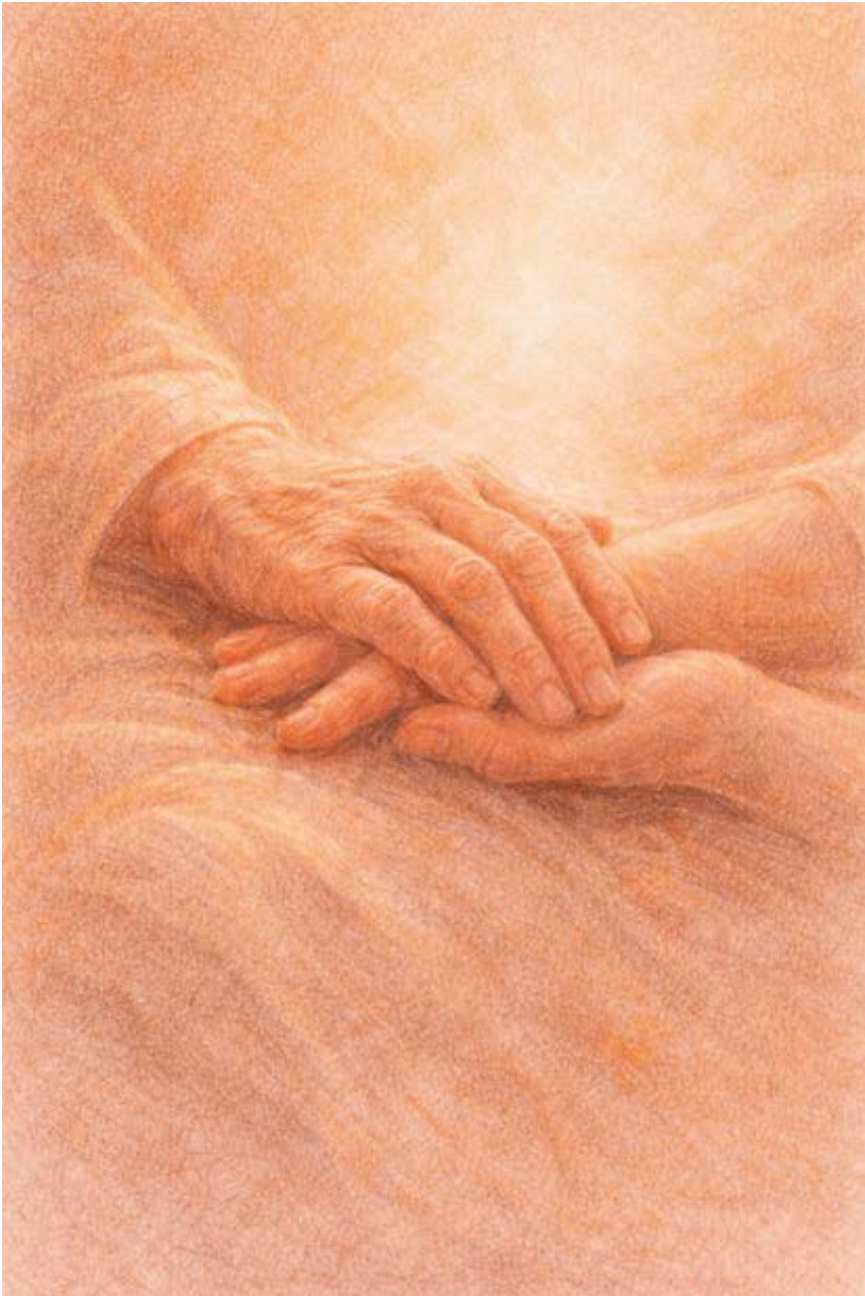


ORANGE

The Colour of Emotional
Balance in Old Age

*Where Emotions takes
the lead*



As life moves forward, many things change. The bodies slow down, relationships shift, roles change, and the world around us feels unfamiliar.

What helps a person stay whole through these changes is not strength alone, but the ability to remain emotionally balanced.

In old age, this balance is tested more often. Situations that were once manageable can now feel heavier.

This is where the emotional balance becomes essential.

Emotional balance is the strength that remains when control reduces.

Old age does not weaken emotions; it often makes them stronger. Irritation comes faster, anxiety stays longer and emotional tiredness sets in quickly.

Emotional balance helps to absorb stress and stay steady during uncertainty. It is not about hiding sadness or forcing cheerfulness; it is the strength to carry worry and grief without collapsing inward.

In the Rainbow of Old Age, Orange represents this inner steadiness — the capacity to remain whole when outer stability reduces.

Dr. Sharmila Sen was a respected gynaecologist in Kolkata. Her husband, Dr. Anirban Sen, was a well-known orthopaedic surgeon and a pioneer in joint replacement surgery. Together, they ran a charitable hospital and lived active, purposeful professional lives.

They had twin sons. Their family managed differences and responsibilities with balance and mutual respect.

Then COVID arrived.

Dr. Anirban fell ill and passed away. The loss was devastating, but it was not the only strain.

The hospital struggled to function, responsibilities multiplied, social contact reduced, and daily routines collapsed.

Grief merged with exhaustion.

Small stresses became intolerable. She became easily irritated and found it difficult to calm herself.

In a shocking moment, completely out of character, she physically attacked a security guard.

This was not cruelty.

It was emotional exhaustion.

The Quest to Stay Emotionally Steady as Life keeps Changing

Life rarely breaks a person in one sudden moment. It presses slowly, repeatedly, and often without pause. One change comes before the earlier one has fully settled. Over time, there is less space to rest, reflect, and recover.

What fades first is not strength, but inner balance.

After losing a loved one, illness, or reduced independence, something inside begins to shift. The patience shortens and the calmness takes longer to return.

An older woman may notice that she speaks sharply to people she once treated gently. An older man may stop talking much, not because he dislikes others, because listening feels tiring.

Small uncertainties may now cause more worry than before.

These changes happen quietly and are often misunderstood. It is not a personality change; it is emotional strain exceeding emotional reserve.

Mr. Iyer lost his wife after many years of marriage. Overnight, his mornings became quiet and the house felt larger. The absence felt heavier at breakfast, where two cups of tea had once rested.

He did not rush to fill the emptiness. Instead, he protected his emotional balance through small, steady choices.

He walked at the same time every evening. He spoke regularly with one old friend. On difficult days, he allowed sadness without pushing it away.

When his knees troubled him, he slowed his walk instead of abandoning it. When sleep became uneven, he rested during the day without guilt.

He learned to say, “I’m fine today but only tired.”

At this stage, the quest is not to prevent loss or remove uncertainty from life. The real challenge is to protect emotional energy and allow recovery.

The emotional balance decides whether old age feels fragile or steady.

*When emotional load
increases, emotional care
becomes essential.*

MOTIONAL FRAILITY

When Inner Balance Becomes Vulnerable

Frailty is often understood as physical weakness.

Emotional frailty is a quieter form of vulnerability. It is a state in which a person's capacity to absorb emotional stress, regulate emotional responses, and recover after strain becomes reduced.

It does not imply mental illness.

Earlier in life, emotional balance is supported by physical energy, faster recovery, multiple roles, and momentum. With ageing, these supports gradually decline, while emotional demands increase.

Emotional frailty develops slowly, through accumulated stress. New challenges arrive before recovery from earlier ones. Over time, tolerance reduces and reactions become stronger, and recovery takes longer.

This change often goes unnoticed until it begins to affect daily life.

Ageing removes emotional buffer, not the capacity

Mrs. Rehmani, a 72-year-old retired schoolteacher, was brought for “behavioral change.” She was neither depressed nor cognitively impaired.

What had changed was her tolerance.

The minor delays unsettled her, small disruptions drained her energy and even brief conversations felt exhausting.

Medical evaluation revealed no significant disease. What had reduced was her emotional reserve.

If the emotional frailty is not recognized early, it can progress into emotional dysregulation.

Recognizing it early; helps to protect the emotional balance, dignity, and inner stability.

Preserving emotional reserve in old age is not optional, though it is essential for health and well-being.

Emotional reserve is a health resource

*Emotional frailty begins,
when emotional recovery
cannot keep pace with
repeated stress*

THE BIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS

Why Emotional Balance Weakens & How It Can Be Protected

Emotions are not abstract feelings. They are biological events involving the brain, hormones, heart rate, breathing, muscle tension, sleep and energy.

Emotions are lived in the body, not only in the mind.

Our emotions are shaped by three interconnected biological systems that work together to protect us, calm us and help us to understand what we feel.

One detects the stress or threat and reacts rapidly with emotions like fear, anger or urgency.

Another one acts like a brake which calms and restores balance.

Last one gives meaning and reflection to what we feel.

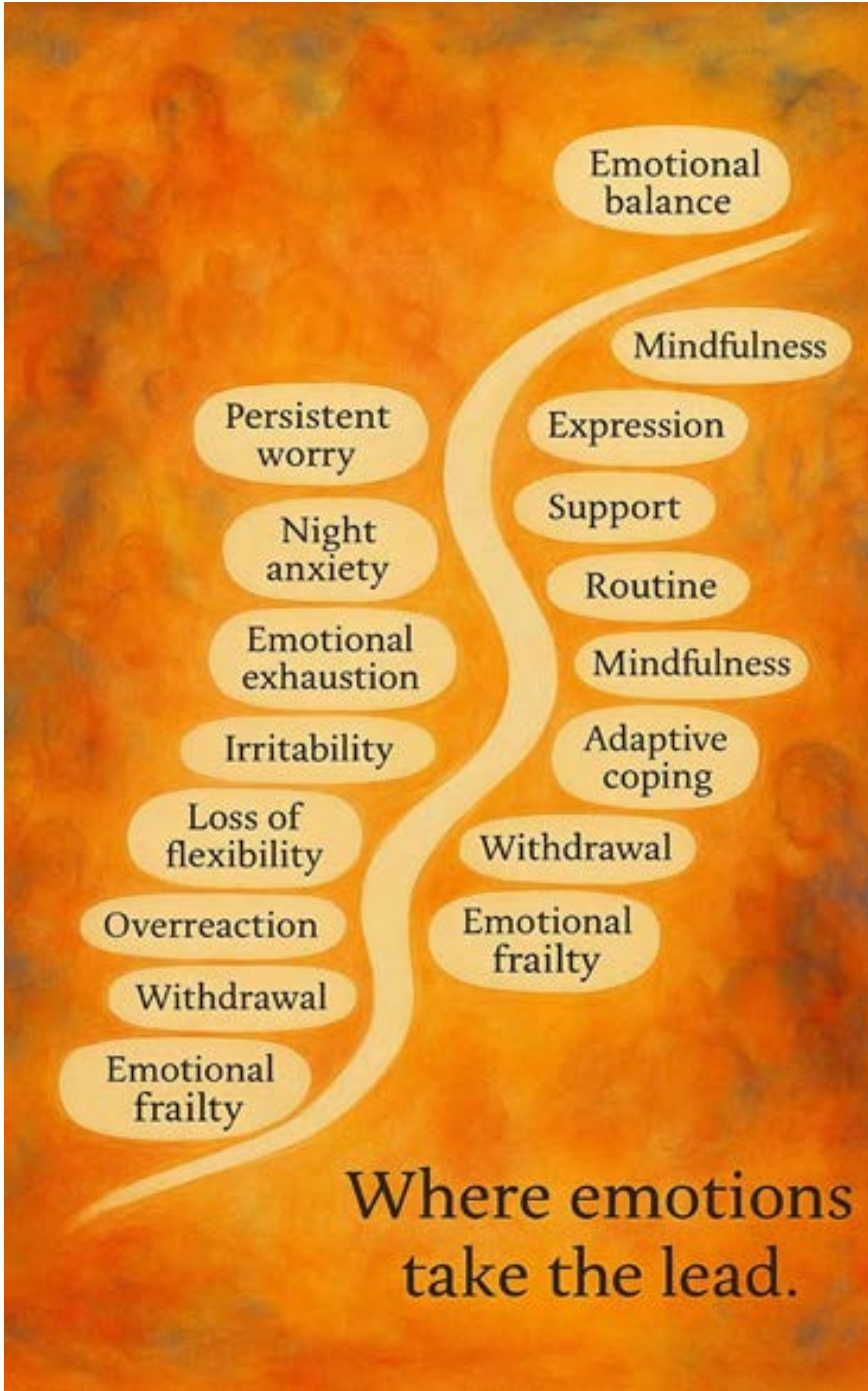
*Old age does not weaken emotion,
it weakens recovery.*

*Emotional strength is not
infinite.
It needs time, rest, and
regulation to refill.*

Orange Alerts

Early Signs That Emotional Balance Is Fading

- Emotional balance rarely collapses suddenly, it weakens quietly. These are the warnings before the emotions collapse.
- An older person may react strongly to small matters. Minor inconveniences like noise, delays, repeated questions or changed routine, make them feel stressful.
- They may struggle with uncertainty. Unexpected plans, unclear information, or waiting without assurance can cause visible restlessness or anxiety.
- Many elders experience emotional tiredness after routine interactions. Ordinary conversations, social visits, or family discussions may leave them feeling drained.
- They may have slower emotional recovery. If hurt, criticised, or disappointed, this feeling lingers.
- The elder may withdraw to protect themselves. They avoid situations, reduce social contact, or choose silence.



Author's Reflection

In old age, what holds a person together is not strength or achievement, but emotional balance.

Life does not arrive as a single crisis, rather it accumulates. What unsettles people is not one event, but the weight of repetition.

I have seen capable, intelligent individuals lose balance — not from weakness, but from emotional exhaustion.

Emotional balance is not the absence of pain. It is the ability to carry pain without losing oneself.

Orange is the inner steadiness that allows a person to remain intact as external stability reduces.

Old age is not about controlling life. It is about staying emotionally steady within it.



*Orange teaches that
emotional balance is the
foundation of inner
stability in old age.*

Reader's Reflection

Orange speaks of safety; of shelter, protection, and the conditions that allow life to continue without constant fear.

Pause here.

1. Where in my life do I feel safe enough to rest, not just survive?

2. Where do I feel unprotected or uncertain, even if I appear secure from outside?

Safety is not luxury. It is the ground on which life, connection, and dignity stand.

Notice where you feel held and where you remain alert.

Then turn the page.

If you wish, you may share your reflection — typed or handwritten — with the Rainbow of Old Age community.

**Scan the QR code below or visit:
www.rainbowofoldage.in/red**