



Ageless Minds in Other Worlds

(Exploring how virtual worlds can foster ageless minds)

When Ageless Mind Project (AMP) was first started in 2015, our goal was to embrace a way of life that draws inspiration and practical advice from all the exciting new research being done on healthful aging. While that goal hasn't changed - we are still excited and inspired by the work being done by others - we've gradually developed an approach of our own that is both unique and effective. That approach involves the use of avatars and virtual worlds.

Why Avatars and Virtual Worlds?

AMP involvement in virtual reality grew out of a presentation the founders attended at a positive aging conference in 2011. The presenter there demonstrated how 3D stories were being used to allow visitors - represented by avatars - to interact with and learn from the content embedded in the story. This led AMP co-founder Lynne Berrett to ask, "How might being an avatar in a virtual world encourage learning, enhance and expand self-expression, and help build communities of interest?"

It wasn't long before she had signed up for Second Life and acquired an avatar of her own. There she began creating and field testing a wide range of activities and programs and has built a global community of individuals, organizations, and educational institutions devoted to exploring how ageless minds can be cultivated within virtual spaces.

Fast forward 13 years. Lynne and a team of over 30 volunteers now offer many different kinds of activities that strengthen mind, body, and spirit. In Second Life these can be explored easily and in a variety of ways - alone, in groups, as part of guided tours, or through unstructured exploration. Best of all, Second Life is open 24/7 and can be accessed without leaving your home.

Explorers in Second Life often discover new interests and new ways of seeing themselves, others, and the world around them. Below is a partial list of what can be seen and experienced when visiting AMP's islands in Second Life:

- Character Strengths Park
- Music and Art Park
- Nutrition Resource Center
- Games Park
- Butterfly Art Gallery
- Hobo Camp
- Cinema Grove
- Healing Garden
- Green Living
- Sunvibes Africa
- Health Hacienda
- Women in STEAM Museum
- Horses, bicycles, dragons, sailboats, ice skating pond
- Wisdom Circle
- Ari's Piano Moments
- Ael's Musical Medleys
- Meditations
- Cold Shot Play Readers
- Death Cafe
- The Writer's Table
- Relationships Circle
- Archive of the seven day Healthful Aging Conference held in May 2023

Individual Paths to Aging Well

Every person has to find their own path to aging well. The important thing is to walk that path consistently. "Knowing *what* to do is not so much the issue," Lynne says. "It's finding the right combination of activities, ones that are natural and fit who you are, so that you are motivated from inside by your interests and needs as well as your aspirations to make them part of your daily life."

Now that you know a little more about AMP's virtual world programs we'd like to know which of them piqued your interest. What questions do you have? What might you be interested in exploring? Also, please tell us a bit about yourself and your experience, if any, with virtual

reality. You can respond in the comments section or email us at AgelessMindProject@gmail.com.

Going forward, we will be discussing how being an avatar can impact your sense of self, improve wellbeing and self-awareness, and help develop communities of interest. We'll also be sharing the stories of the many people we've spent time with in Second Life whose lives have impacted and changed our own for the better.

P.S. If you have a virtual world story of your own to share, we'd love to hear it.

Copyright 2024 by Ageless Mind Project. All Rights Reserved.

Please consider supporting the AMP mission, as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, to make science-based innovative activities that promote healthful aging available to as many people as possible through our online programs.



To learn more about AMP visit: <https://agelessmindproject.org>