



*Living our best lives now and in the future!*

## Choosing Early Retirement to Follow Her Passion

Four years ago, NiAodagain felt like time was running out to follow her dream—to become a professional writer. It was her partner who encouraged her to take early retirement by asking, “If your passion is writing, then why aren’t you writing?”

Before retiring, NiAodagain had written a novel, but



she hadn’t found time to locate a publisher. For about twenty years, her time had been consumed

with her career as an associate professor of world languages; she taught both French and Spanish.

### The Business of Writing

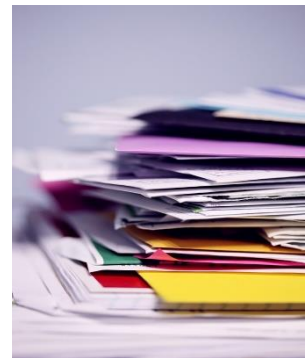
NiAodagain now commits to the “business of writing” three or four days a week. Beyond the work of writing, she spends additional time sending out

out query letters and reviewing various publications that might be a good fit for her work.

She primarily writes about the power of women, the challenges of aging, “the searching inherent in a spiritual practice, and the act of living consciously on the beautiful planet we call home.” In addition to her current writing projects, NiAodagain is in contract negotiations with a publisher for the novel she had written.

### Focusing on What Matters

NiAodagain confessed, “I loved teaching and cherish those years I was able to engage with the amazing students I had, but, I do not have stress in my life in the way I did as a full-time professor. I don’t have weekends filled with grading and the work of creating lesson plans, or the running of a department, or meeting the [different] administrators’ expectations...All of that can be harmful over the years to one’s health and well-being.”



Once she retired, NiAodagain was able to “frame her time” in ways that were most meaningful to her.

She suspects she might have traded one full-time job for another one. Only this time, she has the freedom to “punch out” whenever she wants to do so: “I’m my own boss...I have more time for me, more time to devote to my passions...I experience happiness pretty regularly, as I have all that I want and need in my life.”

In addition to her regular writing work, NiAodagain belongs to two writers’ groups. “They keep me honest,” she said. She is also politically active; she believes in the power of the ballot box to demand a world in which justice and peace can be a daily reality.

### Keeping Grounded

One of the ways NiAodagain relaxes and feeds her soul is to work in the garden. Gardening is one of



her other passions. She spends up to three hours a day working in her garden. She raises both flowers and food. This work helps keep her “grounded and

sane.” She shared, “The sight of a hummingbird ten feet away, sipping the nectar of a fuschia flower, fills me with such joy and awe.”

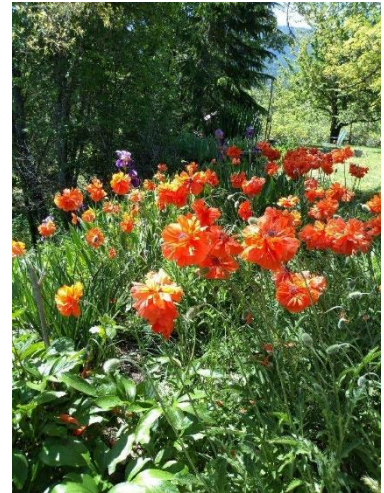
At 62, NiAodagain realizes she could have 25 (or more) years left to live. She believes she’s in the prime of her life. She explained, “I want to be able to say I lived those last 25 years in a deep and purposeful way.”

### Advice for Others Contemplating Retirement

Just because a person reaches a certain age or because other people expect you to do so, those

aren’t valid reasons to retire. NiAodagain said it is important for a person to retire for the right reasons.

“A person should retire because something else calls to them.” As an example, NiAodagain read about a woman who chose to go back to medical school at the age of 55 because she’d always wanted to be a doctor. Other people might have “a passion that needs to be honored and nurtured.” Or maybe, some people want to spend more time with their spouse and other family members. In retirement, people can use their time in new ways.



NiAodagain’s Flowers

Her final piece of advice for anyone considering retirement is to think carefully about what your next 25 years will look like and consider your purpose in life. Quoting Mary Oliver, she asks, “What will you do with your one wild and precious life?”

To enjoy some of Ni Aodagain's writing, please visit her website at [hnauthor.com](http://hnauthor.com)

## Congratulations Winner of Our July Drawing

**James V.** won the July newsletter drawing. He received a copy of *If I Live to Be 100: Lessons from the Centenarians*.

Our next drawing will be on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to [subscribe](#) to our newsletter to be eligible. The winner will receive a Tai Chi DVD.

## A Time for Freedom, Fun, and Fulfillment



The business of aging gets way too much bad press. In reality, life can get a whole lot better as we enter our fifties and beyond. Research suggests that as we age, we are more likely to feel happier than we have in decades. To learn more, [watch](#) my 90-

second video or [Read more](#)...

## Refusing to Let Others Define Us

I love being an older woman. At 67, I feel like I'm finally free to be me. I don't have to impress anyone, and I don't have to conform to stereotypical expectations that our culture tries to impose. Nonetheless, the specter of ageism is always in the shadows. One of the best ways to weaken its presence is to recognize it and call it out.

By educating ourselves about ageism, we can both recognize it and address it. To learn more, I recommend reading Ashton Applewhite's book, *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*.



Applewhite's well-researched book provides a deep look at the roots of ageism and discusses how it affects us in profound ways. She also provides a vision for an "all-age-friendly world" and then calls upon all of us to

become change-agents.

## Interested in Sharing Your Insights with Our Community?

If you'd like to share insights about positive aging or standing against ageism, we'd love to hear from you. If interested, check out [Guest Submissions](#). Also, your [feedback](#) is always appreciated.

## Had a Good Stretch Lately?

Who me, stretch? Over the years, I developed the exercise habit of getting my miles or work-outs completed as quickly as I could. Now, whenever I try to push myself (although I go at a much slower pace), I am much more likely to suffer unpleasant consequences. I am finally learning about the benefits of regularly stretching my muscles.

According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), stretching has several



benefits. Some of those benefits include increased flexibility, improved circulation, better posture, and increased range of motion.

Useful sites: In an article for [Very Well Fit](#), Laura Inverarity, D.O, says stretching can help with balance and coordination. Dr. Inverarity also suggests some useful techniques for how to properly stretch. [Healthline](#) describes some basic stretching exercises that might be especially good for older adults. A site called [Lifespan](#) also suggests activities such as Tai Chi and yoga. All these sites recommend talking with a physical therapist or healthcare provider before starting a stretching program.

## Breaking Up is Hard to Do

Recent reports suggest nearly 20% of adults 65 and over are still working. Many employees cannot afford to retire—especially when they may live for two or three more decades after traditional retirement age. Other employees fear leaving the workplace will erase their identity and purpose; for some, the thought of retirement is like anticipating joining the witness protection program.

Employers who offer financial education and retirement transition support can help employees and can benefit themselves as well. [Read more](#)...