

# TWU Counseling Center

## The Assertiveness Continuum

Polly/Paul Passive



Agatha/Artie Aggressive



Iris/Izzy Indirect



April/AI Assertive



	Polly/Paul Passive	Agatha/Artie Aggressive	Iris/Izzy Indirect	April/AI Assertive
Basic Attitude	I'm not okay.	You're not okay.	You're not okay, but I'll let you think you are	I'm okay and you're okay.
Power	Feels helpless, turns power over to others, uses guilt to control	Substitutes control and domination for power	Uses manipulation and deceit to gain control	Has personal power and shares power easily. Can be vulnerable
Decision Making	Lets others choose for her	Chooses for others whether they like it or not	Is sneaky or deceitful in choosing for others	Chooses for themselves and supports others in making their own decisions
Feedback from others	Guilt, anger, frustration, lack of respect, abuse	Fear, defensiveness, humiliation, hurt	Suspicion, confusion, frustration, feels manipulated	Respect, love, support, inspiration, acceptance, comfort
Sense of Humor	Is often cruelly teased, colludes with put-downs about herself, lets others be funny	Caustic wit, puts down others, can't laugh at themselves.	Sarcasm and cynicism	Playful, loving humor, can laugh at themselves, risks being funny
Courage	Fearful, withdraws, does not stand up for her convictions, tries to get sympathy	Attacks and blames others to cover up fear and insecurity. Talks "tough" and takes unwise risks	Uses trickery and feigns other emotions (e.g. love, sadness, anger to cover up fear)	Is willing to deal with difficulty and pain, has the strength of their convictions, takes calculated risks
Gains/Payoffs	Attention, sympathy, protection, doted on, avoids responsibility	Controls people and situations, wants to have authority and to be right	Sometimes seen as cute and clever, has fun playing games	Self-respect, integrity, responsibility, freedom, intimacy
Price Tag Paid	Loss of freedom, self-respect, and creativity	Loss of love, friendship, and teamwork	Is not trusted, is the victim of retaliation and vengeance	Unrealistic expectations from self and others to be "perfectly" assertive
Burnout Potential	Very high - usually depletes herself, can't say no	Very high - overworked, competition, often super achievers with physical health problems	Very high - takes more and more energy to cover-up deceptions and games	Can become too competent and accomplished from not discriminating in her choices and setting limits
Career Profile	Does what they think they should do - even if it makes them unhappy	Often an unhappy overachiever, who may be a financial success and a person of status	Once their untrustworthiness is discovered, their career takes a nosedive	Usually happy and successful, they feel they can do anything they desire
End Results	Life is a chore for the martyr	Loneliness and bitterness	Loss of identity, trust and respect	Love, happiness and peace of mind