

The Ethics of Dialogue Answer Key

Part I - Character Sketch

- **The Speaker**
 - *Traits:* Should be truthful, responsible, oriented toward reality, not persuasion alone.
 - *Responsibilities:* To present reality faithfully, seek truth, and respect the dignity of the listener.
 - *Risks if Abused:* Uses language as propaganda, manipulates emotions, hides truth for personal gain.
- **The Listener**
 - *Traits:* Must be attentive, critical, discerning, and willing to engage in dialogue.
 - *Responsibilities:* To test the speaker's words against truth, refuse passive acceptance, and seek understanding.
 - *Risks if Abused:* Becomes complacent, gullible, or complicit in spreading falsehoods.

Part II - Reflection Prompts (Sample Answers)

1. *The Ethical Speaker:* A speaker must value truth more than persuasion. They should avoid exaggeration or distortion and resist the temptation to use words as tools of power.
2. *The Vulnerable Listener:* Pieper argues the listener cannot be passive because manipulation succeeds only when people fail to question what they hear. Active listening guards against deception.
3. *Mutual Responsibility:* The speaker and listener are bound together; truth can only be communicated if the speaker intends to share it and the listener seeks to receive it honestly.
4. *Modern Application:* In advertising, slogans often promise happiness through buying a product. When listeners believe these without question, they spend money on illusions rather than reality. This shows how abuse of language leads to misplaced trust and distorted values.