

Are You A Good Partner?

A very important factor in enjoying a game of bridge is that of having a compatible and considerate partner. To do this one **MUST BE** a good partner. The shoe is not on the other foot....it's on yours. It is your responsibility to exhibit a demeanor that is conducive to bringing out the very best in your partner.

Now this is not always easy if you're inclined to be intense and competitive.....traits that are inherent in good bridge players. But I maintain that it's a habit that can be developed if your attitude about this game is such that you want to excel in bridge while making sure both you and your partner enjoy it.

You will find that good partnership bridge is much easier if you always treat your partner as though he (she) is your very best friend. After all, at the bridge table he or she is your **ONLY** friend. You and your chosen partner will likely develop some partnership agreements the more you play together. Without these good communications are very difficult. Use your chosen system and conventions to exchange lawful information during bidding. Likewise practice good defensive carding methods during the play; but make sure such communications do not include any verbal conversation, gestures, or changes in the look on one's face.

Another recommendation in dealing with your partner is to be very disciplined if you are bidding ahead of him (before he has had a chance to do anything including Pass). By this I mean sticking to your predetermined agreements for opening the bidding at the one level or the two level, preempting at a higher level when such a bid describes your hand, and passing when you have nothing to say. Some players may not agree with me on this but I have found it very disconcerting to need to spend all your time and energy trying to figure out what partner is up to now. Of course there are times to deviate from your established norm.....but it's not **ALL** the time.

A very important trait for you to develop and maintain at all times is that of being very cool and even tempered in the heat of battle. Bridge is a very competitive game and those of us who take it very seriously are sometimes tempted to lash out at others whose behavior or ethics at the bridge table are less than perfect. Remember that it's the director's jobs to deal with this....it is not your job, not partner's job and not the opponents' jobs either. Just offer up "Director Please" in the nicest tone of voice you can muster and then be quiet. (I figure if I say this often enough I'll remember to do just that.)

There are some things you probably should not say to partner at any time:

- (1) That's another zero, partner!
- (2) I think I'll go get another drink.
- (3) That's another auction I've never heard before!
- (4) I'd enjoy bridge more if only I could play by myself!
- (5) And try not to let this auction happen:

1S 3S

4NT 4H (opponents accepting the insufficient bid!

4NT 5H

5NT Pass!

The NT bidder is now yelling at partner: "How can you pass 5NT?"
To which he answers: "I already told you how many Aces and how many Kings I have, did you want to know about Queens too?"

Get the idea? While these quips may be clever and entertaining to the opponents your partner may think otherwise.

So for partner's benefit (and the opponents' as well) show up at the bridge table with a smiling face and you'll be on the road to another great game.

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