

Attributes of Good Bridge Players (or Good Attributes of Bridge Players?)

There are a few characteristics or attributes that seem to be inherent in most good bridge players. Some of the following traits may not be readily apparent in those bridge players you admire, but if you think about it for awhile you'll see that most are usually present.

Perhaps the first would be the ability to concentrate. Bridge requires total attention at all times (especially as you get older and have more problems with those "senior moments"). The need to concentrate and to focus on the given hand is ever-present. First you need to think about your hand, then the bidding, then the play and/or defense. If your mind wanders away to something else, it's an effort to keep coming back to exactly where you were before you left. And needless to say, mind wandering takes up valuable time.

Another trait is that of anger management. It's a fact that sometimes things will go awry and you may not be in control to stop them. Duplicate bridge can get rather intense; thus, this trait may well have to be developed. An even temperament is obviously best but there are those who have learned to control their fits of anger so that they don't interfere with their ability to play this game. Once a hand is over, let it go.....whether you got the best score or the worst score. It matters not.....that hand is over.

Bridge is a game of logic. It is not a game of rote.....in fact far from it. It requires the use of logic in order to figure out the hands and what's going on in the play and defense. And to play it well it requires the ability to visualize partner's and opponents' hands.....as well as the ability to count!!

Another important thing is awareness of the fact that this is a partnership endeavor; the need for communications with your partner in both bidding and card play is a priority item. Such things as (1) taking liberties with the vulnerability, (2) making silly and often stupid bids before partner has had a say in the auction, (3) frequent overbidding along with chronic underplaying, and (4) random and ill-conceived doubles are not in the best interest of establishing partnership confidence.

Duplicate bridge players should make every effort to know basic bridge principles in addition to having some knowledge of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge and the Alert Procedure. While one can deviate from accepted bridge principles, the Laws must be followed at all times. Thus the Laws are not to be confused with rules.

Such rules as “second hand low”, “third hand high” and “cover an honor with an honor are really guidelines and, as such, are often broken,

Last but certainly not least is the necessity of having a positive attitude. I can almost guarantee that if you don't believe things are going to work out well, they won't. However, you do have my permission to scream at anyone who says: “Bridge is only a game.”

Good luck. (That's important too.)

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