

# 21 Rules of Being a Good Partner

by Marty Bergen

"I have always believed that your attitude toward your partner is as important as your technical skill at the game." Rixi Markus, one of the all-time great players.

Before you sit down to discuss what you are playing, you should start your partnership off on the right note. Half the battle of winning is being a good partner. Always observe the following:

1. Do not give lessons, unless you are being paid to do so. "According to an evening paper, there are only five real authorities on bridge in this country. Odd how often one gets one of them as a partner." Punch (British magazine).
2. Never say anything to your partner unless you would want him to say the same to you. If you are unsure whether your partner would want you to say something, don't.
3. Never "result" (criticize your partner for a normal action just because it did not work this time).
4. Unless your intent is to clear up a misunderstanding, avoid discussing the hand just played. If you cannot resist, be discreet.
5. Remember -- you and your partner are on the same side.
6. Do not forget that your partner wants to win as much as you do.
7. If you feel the urge to be nasty, sarcastic, critical or loud, excuse yourself and take a walk.
8. When there is time between hands, do not discuss bridge.
9. When you want to consult another player about a disaster, ask about your hand, not your partner's.
10. Do not ever criticize or embarrass your partner in front of others.
11. Remember that bridge is only a card game.
12. Have a good time, and make sure that your partner does also. "Bridge is for fun. You should play the game for no other reason. You should not play bridge to make money, to show how smart you are, or show how stupid your partner is.. or to prove any of the several hundred other things bridge players are so often trying to prove." Bridge legend Charles Goren.
13. Trust your partner; do not assume he has made a mistake.
14. Although it may be unfashionable, it really is okay to be pleasant to a partner with whom you also happen to live.
15. Remember: "The worst analysts and the biggest talkers are often one and the same." Bridge columnist Frank Stewart. Think twice before verbally analyzing a hand. Do not embarrass yourself with a hasty, inaccurate comment.
16. When you voluntarily choose to play bridge with someone, it is not fair to get upset when partner does not play any better than usual.
17. Never side with an opponent against your partner. If you cannot support your partner, say nothing.
18. If you think you are too good for a partner, and do not enjoy playing bridge with him, do everyone a favor and play with someone else. That is clearly much better than being a martyr. However, be careful before burning bridges -- another player's grass may not be.
19. Learn your partner's style, regardless of how you feel about it. Do not expect your partner to bid exactly as you would. When partner makes a bid, consider what he will have, not what you would have.
20. Try to picture problems from partner's point of view. Seek the bid or play that will make his life easiest.
21. Sympathize with partner if he makes a mistake. Let your partner know that you like him, and always root for him 100%.