



The Future Life Master



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The Other Golden Rule in Bridge



by Blair and Barbara Lapwing

Barbara and I like to play bridge together, which is lucky because we live together. I say "lucky," but our continued cohabitation hinges much more on conscious efforts than luck.

Five years ago, with an eye on our pending retirement, we decided to take bridge lessons. We wanted something we could do together and which would be both challenging and rewarding enough to hold our interest for a good while. Under the tutelage of the illustrious Scott Humphrey, we learned the game (*Scott might say "more or less"--Barbara*) and quickly succumbed to the lure of the Bridge Center of Austin.

One of the first things we discovered about competitive bridge is that partnerships stress mightily under the weight of egotism, ambition, and pride. At those early games, we witnessed--sometimes in alarm, but more often in amusement--the very public clashes between partners. People were being rude to each other; they were unsympathetic over partner's trials; they were unsupportive when partner needed encouragement; they were behaving like complete jerks. We wondered why some of these dysfunctional partnerships persisted. Surely, we thought, these people could find someone else to play bridge with. Especially the married-or-equivalent partners. They, of all people, should manage to be helpful and constructive, not petty and acerbic. Full of our oh-so-righteous certitude that we were above such caustic conflicts, we privately shook our heads, clucked and snickered, smugly confident we would do right by each other. Yes, we were married and ours was the best possible

(con't on page 2)

Declarer play--Card Combos

by Tom Clark, BCA Club Manger

As DECLARER...how well do you know your card combinations? This is the first in a series for proper technique to improve declarer play when missing honors in a suit. Certain ground rules apply...

- Opponents' hands are unknown.
- A losing finesse to either opponent will not be detrimental to the rest of the hand.
- Communication back and forth from dummy to declarer's hand is not an issue.

If exception exists to any of the above...a different approach could be essential.

FINESSING for the QUEEN...

- With 8 cards or fewer combined (dummy + declarer) take the finesse.
- Cash an Ace or a King (in case there is a singleton Queen) **if** your ability to **properly** finesse is not hindered.

A K J 10 4
5 3 2

Play the Ace (or King), then return to your hand in a different suit and finesse the Jack.

A K J 10 4
3 2

If extra tricks are essential (such as in NT), take a first-round finesse. With a doubleton, cashing a top honor first would deny the possibility of picking up Qxxx onside.

A J 4 2
K 5 3

Play the king then finesse the Jack.

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The Other Golden Rule (con't)

bridge partnership ever.

I was convinced we had a beautiful future together, playing bridge until we expired, virtually sparkling with a connubial gleam in gaming nirvana. Yep, we were good to each other . . . right up the point when Barbara, on the drive home after a game said, "You were way out of line all night. I don't respect it. I don't need it. Get a grip or get a new partner." (*He's paraphrasing because there is no room for coarseness in this newsletter--Barbara.*)

My own egotism, ambition, and pride had taken me directly to the same place where I had found so much to ridicule in others. Now I was the ludicrous partner, and unless I changed my ways, my future in bridge would be Barbara-less. We're both competitive, and we play to win. But a win is hollow and pyrrhic if we lose our partner along the way. Barbara was doing her bit for the partnership, but I was advising, steering, and discounting her skills, all in utter ignorance, considering my very limited experience in the game.

Humbled by her warning, I sought a solution and found that the answer was directly in front of me, right there among the other players. While the bad partnerships tended to attract my attention, I was blind to the beautiful relationships many of the married partners were enjoying. I watched the acts of kindness and forgiveness exchanged between partners and resolved to emulate them (*good thinking--Barbara*). In the process, Barbara and I came together in restored appreciation for the things we hoped to get when we started taking lessons. Essentially, bridge is a shared pastime for us, not a no-holds-barred assault in which total domination is the only acceptable outcome. It's true we have different levels of interest; I play more often than Barbara, but we have the Tuesday game plus a weekly social game to enjoy together. We recognize and respect each other's differences while appreciating our shared love of the game.

Perhaps I have exaggerated my faults in a sort of act of contrition (*you can never say "I'm sorry" too often--Barbara*), and I certainly do not want to appear righteous or self-aggrandizing, but the key to Barbara's and my future as bridge partners is something we've known all along: we treat people in the way we wish them to treat us. Some call it the Golden Rule, or the Ethic of Reciprocity, or even the Law of One. Verily, I say, "Do unto . . ."

(Okay, hold it right there. This is all such a large load of malarkey! Bridge is okay once or twice a week, I suppose, but the main reason I play with him is to keep him interested in the game. I just want him out of the house for a few hours several times a week--Barbara.)

Ed note: Thanks Blair and Barbara. We'll be keeping an eye on you.

Declarer Play--Card Combos (con't)

A J 8 7 4

K 6 5 3 2

Play the King first in case Qxx is onside (suit breaking 3-0...which cannot be picked up offside).

A K 5 2

J 9 4 3

Play the Ace-King in hopes of dropping the Queen. There is no advantageous finesse. A singleton Queen onside will allow declarer to pick up the suit.

10 4 2

A K J 8 3

Play the Ace (or King) first, then enter dummy by another suit and lead the 10. This allows declarer to pick up Qxxx onside.

K 9 2

A J 10 5 4

A two-way finessing position...with no information, it is better (and less awkward) to play the King first, and then finesse the Queen. This caters to a singleton Queen on declarer's left or Qxxx on declarer's right. **Resource; Richard Pavlicek.**

Tourney Calendar

Unit 207 199er Sectional, BCA--Saturday, February 11, 1:30 pm and Sunday, February 12, 1:30 pm

Inter-Club Championship, BCA--Sunday, February 19, 1:30 pm. 199ers in Austin and other parts of Texas will play the same hands. Masterpoint awards are made at the local level and then later, when compared to scores from other clubs.

1-35 Cup Qualifier, BCA--Saturday, March 3, 10:00 am. 299er and Open teams compete with San Antonio for honors and masterpoints. See the Unit 207 website for complete details: www.austinbridge.org

Spring Sectional, BCA--Thursday, March 8- Sunday, March 11. 199er games at 10:00 am, 2:00 pm, and 7:00 pm See the BCA website for complete details: www.bridgecenteraustin.com

The Future Life Master is a semi-monthly publication of ACBL Unit 207. Laura Delfeld, editor. Please forward news of Novice lessons or games to: delhan@swbell.net