

Partnership Bridge 310

with coaches Matthew and Pamela Granovetter

Lesson One: Introduction

I. Finding the Right Partner

You've studied and you've learned and you've played and you've become experienced, and now you're ready to form a serious partnership. This is a 300-level course rather than a 100- or 200-level course, because forming a successful "serious partnership" involves a great deal of energy, hard work, memory and frustration. Chances are the first partnership or two won't work, and you'll have to begin again (and many people never do find the perfect partner). How can this happen? There are a number of reasons, including:

1. There's a major conflict between the two partners regarding bidding styles.
2. There's a major conflict regarding "work ethic."
3. There's a major conflict regarding the partnership's attitude about the at-the-table bad results.
4. There's no chemistry.

Can these problems be fixed? Let's look at these problems more deeply.

1. There's a major conflict between the two partners regarding bidding styles.

This can be a major difficulty, but it doesn't have to be. For example, we like to play sound opening bids, but we have both had success with partners who play light opening bids. It works like this: I know what partner has and partner knows what I have, so we're on the same wavelength.

Not all players, however, are able to do this. You might end up with a partner who bids light while you bid sound, but rather than figuring out what you have, your partner bids with you as he would bid with himself (so you end up missing games because partner continues to invite with hands that are actually game-forcing opposite your sound bidding). Partner must know how to take advantage of what he knows about your style (and the same goes for you: You must stop hanging him because whatever it is you need, he never has!).

Whenever you become involved in a serious partnership, you will be privy to a great deal of information from knowing your partner's style (which is perfectly ethical and legal). This is one of the big payoffs you gain by investing in a regular partnership. Accepting partner's style with grace and putting to good use partner's idiosyncrasies is what makes for successful rubber-bridge players, and there's no reason you shouldn't be able to do it one-to-one as well.

For example, suppose your partner is a very active, very aggressive bidder, and you pick up at favorable vulnerability:

♠ A 8 4
♥ 9
♦ A K 9 8 3
♣ Q 5 4 2

LHO opens one spade and it goes pass-pass to you.

Where are the rest of the high-card points, and where are the hearts?

Partner doesn't have them, and a savvy player might back his judgment and pass this one out. In real life, the whole hand was:

	North	
	♠ 9 3	
	♥ K J 5 4 3 2	
	♦ 7	
	♣ 9 7 6 3	
West		East
♠ 7 6 2		♠ A 8 4
♥ 10 6		♥ 9
♦ Q J 10 4 2		♦ A K 9 8 3
♣ K 10 8		♣ Q 5 4 2
	South	
	♠ K Q J 10 5	
	♥ A Q 8 7	
	♦ 6 5	
	♣ A J	

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	pass	pass	pass

And East *did* pass out the hand!

East could not possibly pass out the hand if playing with a sound partner who is careful about overcalls, but thankfully (for East) partner was the ultra-aggressive type. So East took a calculated risk that it was the op-

ponents' hand and they had the hearts (yes, North should have responded to the opening bid, but taking advantage of their mistakes is always a good way to win points).

Here are some additional common "style" differences:

- ♦ There are point-counters vs. hand evaluators (and don't underestimate the aggravation this particular clash can cause).
- ♦ There are bulldog bidders vs. needle-threaders.
- ♦ There are mad scientists vs. seat-of-the-pants players.

If you're content to accept partner at face value and take full advantage of what you know about his style, then the style difference won't be a big problem. If you just can't do it (and not everyone can), find someone who has a similar style to your own.

Lesson one continues but this is the end of the free sample. We hope you've enjoyed it. If you would like to purchase the course, you can do so now.

Just [click here](#) to go to the Bridgetoday.com e-store to order the course over the Internet or contact us personally by email at:

matt@bridgetoday.com