



## THE GAME OF LIFE

### Bridge teaches plenty of lessons for the living

'As in bridge, it is smart to maintain control and not to run out of trumps,' writes Alice Lukacs. Figure out your 'winning trump cards' and stay in charge.

When COVID imposing isolation, I have not been playing bridge for years. Now that things are returning to almost-normal, I am planning to return to the bridge table if only to be, once again, part of a social circle. Bridge is good therapy, too, where you concentrate on the game to the exclusion of everything else. However, out of practice, I am pulling out my bridge books, all by Audrey Grant to refresh my memory. As I have in the past, I find that many precepts for a successful bridge game and for successful living are identical.

Following are some of the examples.

#### Why is the game called bridge

Guess what? You have a partner at the bridge table with whom you combine forces and to whom you 'build a bridge' for a successful game. It took me the longest time to realize that I am not alone at the bridge table, that my partner and I are a team and communication between us is essential. Same applies to real life. It helps if you don't struggle alone but build 'bridges.' Life, too, is a partnership game, so it is good advice to become part of a team or a partnership for a successful outcome.

#### Have a plan

Audrey Grant strongly advises that, before starting to play the hand, players pause and make a four-step plan on how to proceed. This plan applies to real life, too. Don't jump into projects, take time to review your goal before acting. First, you must stop and determine your objective. Then, you look at your cards, your 'winners and losers,' your assets and liabilities, just as you would at the bridge table.

Next, you figure out ways of making the game, that is reaching your goal. Finally, you go ahead and put your plan into action!

#### Trump it

No, this won't be about a certain well-known political personality. Life, as well as bridge, deals us some trump cards; at bridge these are cards of a designated suit that will win tricks. As in bridge, it

is smart to maintain control and not to run out of trumps. Figure out your winning 'trump cards' and stay in charge!

### **What is your long suit?**

Bridge, as well as life, can deal you a long suit in which even lowly cards can win tricks. Find your 'long suit' in life; a special skill or talent, develop it and you will have a winning game.

### **Why not try a finesse**

In bridge, this is a surprise move to outwit opponents and win an extra trick. Works in real life, too – a little cunning can get you the desired result if the opponents 'cards' are favourably placed. As you would at the bridge table, count on your good luck!

### **In case you are vulnerable**

At the bridge table, when you and your partner are 'vulnerable' the scoring penalties are much higher, but so is the bonus if you make the game contract. When vulnerable, you watch your bidding more carefully. In life, too, we have our vulnerable periods when we should watch our moves. Once we are no longer 'vulnerable' we can take chances at the bridge table – as in real life.

### **Be a risk-taker**

How many times have I made a slam – that's when you take 13 or all but one trick – without bidding it, thereby losing important points?

Even though I had a suitable hand, I was afraid to bid all the way. Life, too, presents these opportunities. What bridge teaches us is that, when there is a reasonable chance of achieving a major goal, one should not be afraid but jump in and take a risk. Nothing ventured, nothing gained – on the other hand, the rewards are big when, on the right occasion, you take action

Well, that's it, folks. Let the game begin with whatever hand you are dealt, in life or at the card table.

Published in The Gazette, May 23, 2023

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