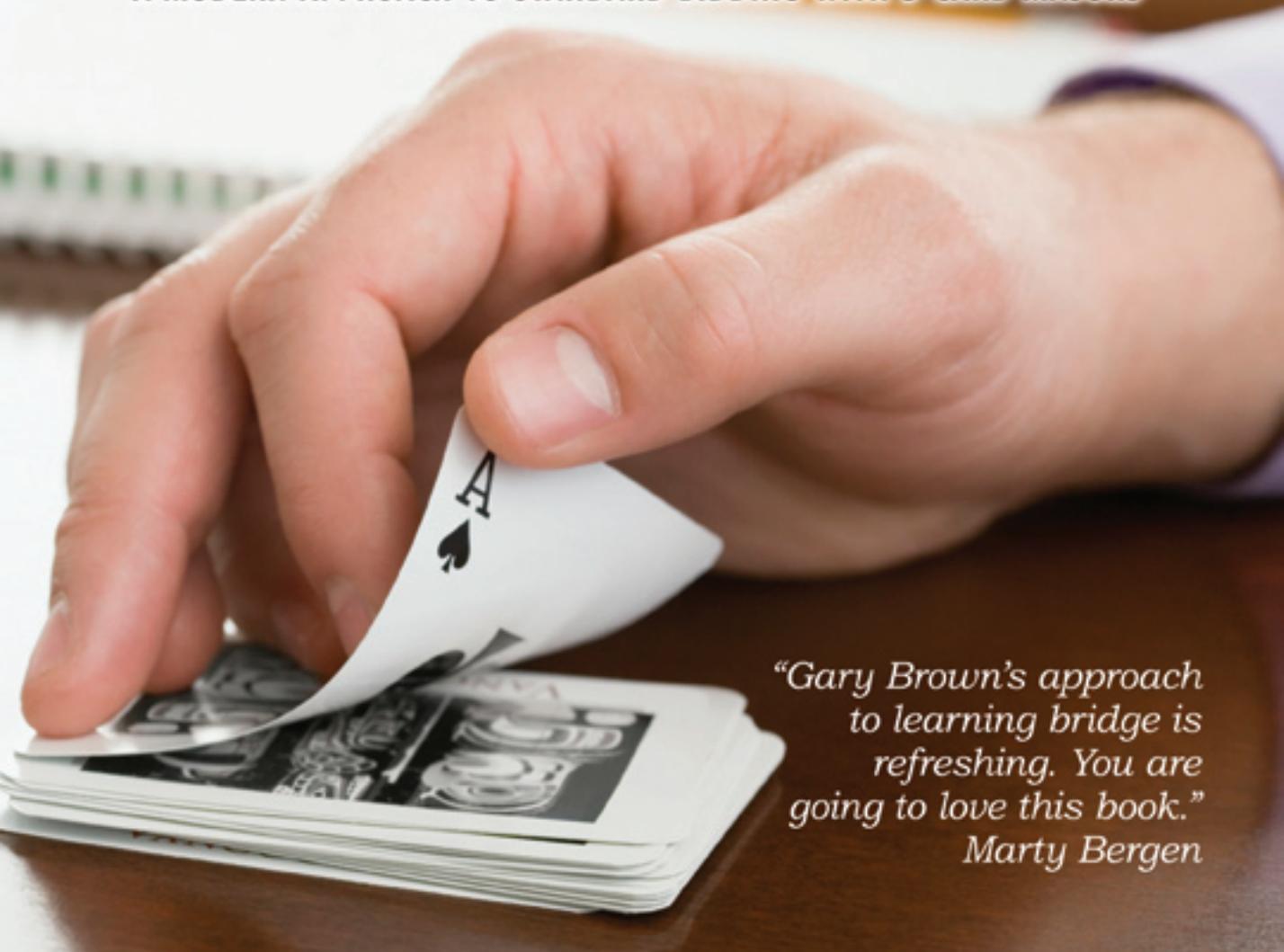




Gary Brown's

LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE

A MODERN APPROACH TO STANDARD BIDDING WITH 5-CARD MAJORS



*"Gary Brown's approach to learning bridge is refreshing. You are going to love this book."
Marty Bergen*

Text © 2008 Gary Brown

All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

Master Point Press

331 Douglas Ave.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada (416) 781-0351

M5M 1H2

Website: www.masterpointpress.com

www.masteringbridge.com

www.ebooksbridge.com

www.bridgeblogging.com

Email: info@masterpointpress.com

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Brown, Gary

Gary Brown's Learn to play bridge / written by Gary Brown.

ISBN 978-1-55494-028-8

1. Contract bridge. I. Title. II. Title: Learn to play bridge.

GV1282.3.B76 2008

795.41'5

C2008-904143-7

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry development Program (BPIDP) for our publishing activities.

Editor

Ray Lee

Copy editing

Suzanne Hocking

Interior format

Suzanne Hocking/Sally Sparrow

Cover and interior design

Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

GET INTO THE CONVERSATION

Aspiring bridge players, you are about to learn a new language, Bridgese. This sounds daunting, but it is a language of few words. Bridgese is your key to a conversation you will want to be in.

The approach and philosophy of this book is to present the game of Bridge to aspiring players in the way it is played today, not yesterday. As a full-time Bridge teacher, I've had a constant uphill battle bridging the gap between the old-style ideas prevalent in more dated teaching material versus the many modern approaches which are in actual practice across the country.

old: 16-18 NT

new: 15-17 NT

old: Strong twos

new: Weak twos (with strong 2♣)

old: 1♥ - 4♥ = 13+

new: 1♥ - 4♥ = weak freak

When I first started teaching Bridge I taught the old way. That was because most of the published textbooks, manuals and guides were still teaching old-style ideas. However, because I am in it for the long haul, teaching old ways in a new world has come back to haunt me. I have started producing my own material, as well as networking with Bridge organizations and teachers around the world who are leading the charge and blazing new trails into the new millennium of Bridge.

There may be ideas in this book which are not completely in sync with your style. I have stayed true to modern Standard American Bidding, with one personal preference (1NT - 3♣/♦ as invitational). Whenever there is a choice of multiple accepted ways (invitational, weak or strong) I have let the frequency factor guide me.

Bridge teachers can download a PDF teacher's manual from www.masteringbridge.com to use with this book in introductory classes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Muchas gracias to my wife Joanne, Jo Ann Lynds, Kathie MacNab, Joe Hortie and Judith Wood, for their tireless efforts in editing this ever-evolving manuscript.

Also, a nod to every student I have had the privilege to teach to play Bridge.

To my father, Avon Brown. Your literary influence was there after all. Love you, Dad.

Bridge is a partnership game. Don Aylward, Gylfi Baldursson, Joe Hortie, Leo Weniger and Eric Balkam: thank you, gentlemen.

“First learn the meaning of what you say, then speak.”
Epictetus, AD 55

And then speak only when you have something to say...

“Give every man thine ear, and few thy voice.”
Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

I quote others only in order to express myself better.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Foreword	7
	Introduction	9
1	Mechanics of the game	11
2	Hand evaluation, opening one bids	21
3	Scoring, responses to a 1NT opening	33
4	Responses to openings of one of a suit	51
5	Opener's second bid	67
6	Two conventions: Stayman and Blackwood	81
7	Competitive bidding	93
8	Opening at the two-level	103
	Glossary	115

FOREWORD

Writing this book was something I thought about doing for twelve years. I was delighted and honored to see it named 'Book of the Year' by the American Bridge Teachers Association in 2007. It is an introduction to Bridge through the eyes of Standard American, the most popular bidding system in the world. Not everything you will eventually learn about Bridge is in this book, but what you need to know to get both oars in the water is here. Let enjoyment be your guide as you relax and take in what you can. The game will captivate you all by itself. If you enjoy cards, you will love Bridge.

One of the exciting things about teaching Bridge is the opportunity to develop and implement new teaching methods. I do not think there are 'dumb' questions and I like the challenge of making things understandable. My style of teaching is a blend of seizing the teachable moments while entertaining the class. I know that feeling uptight and tense stifles the student, while feeling loose and comfortable facilitates the learning process, creating a nice energy in the room. Some people ask, 'Don't you ever get sick of teaching Bridge day in and day out?' I say, 'I love Bridge and I love teaching.' They say, 'Oh.'

I have created several learning aids and written several Bridge books including the one in your hands. My most recent book, *Standard American: With a Limit Bidding Structure*, is a comprehensive compilation of the bidding system you will learn in this book. I am also the creator of the popular learning aid Flash Cards. On top of all this, for people who love to combine travel with Bridge, I organize and host Bridge tours all over the world, through my company Oz Bridge Travel. For more info on Flash cards and travel, visit www.ozbridgetravel.com.

AM I PERSPIRING?

There will be times when you will feel overwhelmed while learning Bridge. This cannot be avoided. Do not let this get you down as it is part and parcel of learning the game. As with anything worth its while that you want to accomplish, you must put in an effort to learn Bridge. Take it one card, one hand at a time and stick with it. Learning Bridge happens at what I would call a glacial pace, but persistence will defeat resistance. Eventually you will get a grasp of the basics. The game will capture your imagination, intoxicate you, and finally become a big part of your life. However good you get, remember that **lesser players are not lesser people**.

INTRODUCTION

Bridge is the fastest growing game amongst people aged 45 and over. That is not to say that young people do not play, because they do; there are World Junior Championships! Of all the card games in the world, Bridge is by far the most popular and the most intellectual. Bridge offers a social outlet as you meet new friends and enjoy new experiences, which results in your social landscape changing. Bridge keeps your mind sharp and your people skills honed. There seems no in-between for Bridge players — either you are an addict or you are not. As an addict, you will share a common bond with millions of people the world over. It is said that playing Bridge forces you to think in ways that actually fend off senility. Also, did you know that Bridge players live longer?

There is a famous Zen story about the learned professor of Oriental Studies who visited a master in a temple in Japan. The master received the professor in his private room, and an attendant served tea. As soon as he seated himself, the professor began talking on and on about Zen philosophy. The master said nothing as he poured tea into his guest's cup. The professor hardly noticed, and kept talking and talking — he felt, in fact, wonderfully inspired. Suddenly he realized that the Zen master was still pouring tea even though the cup had long since overflowed, and the tea had spilled out on to the tatami mat. Yet still the master continued to pour.

'Stop, stop, what are you doing?' cried the professor. The master looked up. 'Just as the cup cannot hold any more tea when it is already filled,' he said, 'I cannot give you anything when your mind is already filled.'

What the Zen master is suggesting is that to facilitate the learning process we must first empty our minds of any preconceived notions and ideas. If you feel a bit anxious, that is okay. But let go of what you think you know about Bridge. If you feel in a bit of a fright, then let go of that too. Now you can just relax and take it all in.

O N E

Mechanics of the game

The book

Bridgese

Bridge in 3D

What in? How high?

Bidding elevator



“I am sorry I have not learnt to play at cards. It is very useful in life: it generates kindness, and consolidates society.”

– Samuel Johnson