

In bridge, deception is good and lying is bad. They are synonyms, so it is challenging to tell them apart. Difficult? Yes. But we are bridge players. We eat “difficult” for breakfast!

A few words about lying. I am qualified (for obvious reasons) to talk about the evils of lying. It is very simple. “Don’t do it”. Your partner gets angry. Some get even with you. Then they quit playing with you. They might be talking behind your back about the pain they have endured while playing with you and what a relief it was for them when that pain stopped. The word spreads. You feel lonely at the club. The only people that will play with you are other liars. You don’t really like each other but you keep playing together because your alternatives are few. You deserve each other. You end up paying \$6 a session for bridge and \$100 per session for therapy (because you play bridge). Nice! Are we having fun now? My sermon is over. Don’t lie.

OK. Lying is off the table (so to speak). We don’t really want to lie anyway. We just want to keep that threat alive. Your opponents should have serious doubts about your integrity. Your partners should be wondering why you did not enter the ministry.

But (and this is the part I like), all rules can be broken occasionally. For instance, dummy comes down and a little arithmetic tells you that partner is completely broke. You can see that you have all the remaining points. Your opponents don’t know that. Attitude and first discard? Play whatever you like. You are in the “Deception Zone”. Being honest here is not required. This is a fun place to be. And you know that bridge players are all about having fun. Rejoice!

OK, I should say something about bridge. At CHAT, I see some of us working on attitude and discards. We are trying to give partner some direction on how to defend. The opening lead is a great place to improve partnership communication. Partner needs help in knowing whether to continue playing a suit. We have rules for this.

Rule: We lead from the top of a sequence; **Ten** from **T98**. But, when following third hand we should play the lowest of touching cards; **Nine** from **JT9**.

First Example:

	64 (dummy)	
Q9753		Jack
	A (declarer)	

You lead the 5 and partner plays the Jack. It is very likely that Declarer has the AKT. Third-hand-high says partner does not have the King. The low-from-a-sequence rule says partner doesn’t have the Ten. If you continue this suit when you get in, you will give up a trick.

Second Example:

	64 (dummy)	
Q9753		10
	A (declarer)	

You lead the 5 and partner plays the Ten. It is very likely that Declarer has the **AK** – if he had the jack he would have won the trick with the jack. So, **partner has the Jack** as well as the **10**. It is safe to continue and set up the suit the next time you get in.

The first example shows that partner does not have the **JT** sequence. The second example shows that partner does have **JT**. Even with a very ugly hand your play makes a difference. You need to help your partner make decisions. Follow suit with the right card.

Arne Fockler