This article is meant to give some tips on maintaining a reasonably sane partnership.

1. Remember, your partner wants to win as much as you do. He’s not sitting there to sabotage your game. If he’s having a bad night, be understanding. It could happen to you next week.

2. Never discuss a poor result at the table.

3. Never comment on partner’s bidding or card play until after you see the results for the hand. When you make a negative comment, and your partner (and your opponents) see that you got a good result on the hand, all three of them will be laughing (hopefully not out loud) at the egg on your face.

4. Try and play with someone who laughs a lot (especially at themselves). Happy players are much more fun to play with.

5. With a regular partner, try the following approach to the question of bidding with light or dubious hands:
   - The first member of the partnership to bid should have some leeway (especially in competitive auctions). If neither of you takes a risk, your opponents will walk all over you.
   - The second member of the partnership to bid (ie, responding to partner’s action) should strive to bid as accurately as possible. Don’t overbid, and especially don’t underbid fearing your partner has taken a chance. Bid your hand “down the middle” so partner can rely on you. Then trust his decision on further action (or lack of it).
   - The worst thing to find is that both of you have overbid (or underbid).
Bridge Is A Partnership Game

6. Here’s some advice when you’re playing with someone for the first time (especially if you’ve never seen them play before):
   - Don’t try and learn a new convention before the game starts. If you or your partner don’t know a particular convention, don’t play it. Chances are it won’t come up anyway, or if it does, you can figure out another approach.
   - Agree on a general approach to the game. How do you both feel about light openings? light preempts? frisky overcalls? This is extremely important: put a very conservative bidder together with someone who thinks passing shows lack of imagination, and only your opponents will be amused.
   - Agree on a simple approach to competitive auctions. One that works well is to agree that all raises of partner’s suit in competition show support with weak hands (6-9 points), and that a cue bid shows support with a decent hand (10+ points). Simple, and avoids major disasters.

7. When your partner makes a mistake, don’t tell him. He probably already knows.

8. Bid and play with confidence. It makes your partner feel better.

9. When your partner has done something really silly and you’ve received a horrible score, don’t do something even sillier on the next hand.

10. When your bid asks partner his opinion, and his bid gives it, don’t overrule it. Partners sometimes do the right thing.

11. If you’re playing with a less experienced partner, adapt to his level of play. Avoid making obscure bids your partner probably won’t understand, and avoid placing your partner in awkward contracts.

12. Stick to your bidding agreements. Make sure your partner can believe you when everyone at the table is bidding their faces off.

13. When you and your partner do agree to play a new convention, be prepared for both of you to mess it up at least twice.

14. If you do want to discuss something with your partner regarding a hand, do it away from the table and after the round is over. When you are discussing, keep these points in mind:
   - Don’t focus on the result of an actual hand. Do not treat a normal action that happened to result in a poor score as a mistake. Bridge is a game of probabilities: normal actions sometimes result in bad scores. Live with it or take up chequers.
   - Make sure your analysis is accurate before you make it. Then make sure again.
   - Make suggestions in a constructive way. Saying, “Why did you make such a dumb bid?” probably isn’t going to help your partner change or improve. Be unemotional and objective.

15. When your partner does want to learn from you during the session, he’ll ask the questions. Wait until then to answer them.

16. Always try for the best result possible, rather than the best possible result. (A direct quote from S.J.)
Simon’s classic book, “Why You Lose At Bridge”. It was written in 1946, and it’s still one of the best bridge books ever.

17. When making a director call (“Director, please”) for an infraction made by the opponents, do not try and explain your reasoning if the opponents are unaware of their infraction. Simply say “Don’t worry, the director will take care of it.”

18. If an infraction occurs at the table, politely call the director (“Director, please”) even if you know what to do.

19. Don’t take offence at inadvertent or ignorant breaches of rules or etiquette by other players, especially inexperienced ones. Smooth the waters by saying something like, “It’s no problem; I just wanted you to learn about some of the more obscure rules they make us follow.”

20. Never make a negative comment about the opponents’ bidding or play. It’s not only a reflection on your rudeness, but it embarrasses your partner.

21. Never tell other players the mistakes your partner made. Guess what he is doing while you are complaining about him?