

I missed a few weeks of CHAT the last month, so I am short on bridge material. But I am not short on material. I mentioned my son Andy in an article a few months ago. Let me tell you a few more things about Andy. It will eventually connect with bridge (kind of).

Andy is 46 years old and lives in a Cardinal of Minnesota home with 3 other men and 24/7 staff support. These men are incredibly different in terms of likes/dislikes, but they have grown together in a very nice manner. They look out for each other and find activities that they do enjoy as a “family”. They argue and fight with each other on occasion. They annoy their in-home staff at times; just like a real family.

Andy is my conscience. He makes me hide “the real me”. Anything he knows about me is soon public knowledge. Openness and transparency with Andy are very high risk. He has a way of taking my words and making them sound considerably worse than the truth. If I am talking and joking about some minor mistake I made today, he can reword it to sound criminal.

A few decades ago, I was on a business trip. I was gone several days. I got back about noon and drove from the airport to the IBM cafeteria (my kids loved to eat at the IBM cafeteria). As I entered the cafeteria, Andy says in a loud voice “Hi Dad! Are you going to come home and live with us now?” A few faces turned and seemed to pretend they hadn’t heard anything, but it must have been obvious to them that Arne was having a few problems at home!

Years later, I attended a bridge tournament in LaCrosse. We played in the team game on Sunday and I got home late in the afternoon. That morning, when Andy went to church, he raced to the spot where pastor was greeting people. Andy spoke up: “My Dad won’t be here today. He’s playing cards”. It must have sounded like I was at an all-night poker game. Subsequently, Pastor enjoyed asking me how the card game worked out for me.

My church friends now associate my face with playing bridge. Party bridge players from church often question me about what duplicate bridge is like. They are curious but are apprehensive about trying it out. Many have the perception that we are **obsessed** with bridge and would show no mercy at the table. C’mon! I go to church, don’t I? Go Figure!

I do tell them to try CHAT Bridge as a simple, nonthreatening way to check us out. Also, that they could attend our bridge classes and learn (from very friendly people) more of the basics of the game. I’m making some progress, but it is very slow. A better approach might be to offer to take them to the club myself and partner with them at CHAT. I am nonthreatening. Even my club opponents don’t perceive me as much of a threat anymore.

But I don’t invite them because I am **obsessed** with earning points and gaining back that threatening demeanor that we all strive for. Obsession can’t be all bad. It shows purpose!

The good: Andy has opened the door for me to promote our club. No “cold calls” needed!

Arne.