

4) **GOOD-BAD 2NT.**

This highly useful concept can best be explained with an example. Say you open the bidding with one heart, holding

♠ x x ♥ A K x x x ♦ x ♣ K J 10 x x.

Your partner responds one notrump and your right hand opponent bids two spades. Despite your mere 11 high-card points you'd love to bid three clubs. After all, you know the opponents have at least eight spades (partner denied four when he bid one notrump), so you can't leave them on the two level.

The problem with bidding three clubs is that you would also have to bid three clubs with a 17-count! How does partner know if you're just competing, or if you really have a good hand? This kind of problem comes up all the time - you'd love to bid, but you're afraid to mislead partner about the strength of your hand.

We solve this problem with Good-Bad 2NT - a variation of the Lebensohl convention. It enables us to compete to the three level in a very effective manner. Here is the rule:

**In a competitive auction, when RHO makes any two-level call, our 2NT bid is not natural. It shows a desire to compete to the three level, and requests that partner bid three clubs, after which the 2NT bidder shows his suit.**

If the suit is clubs the two-notrump bidder can pass the forced three-club bid. Bidding directly on the three level (without relaying first with two notrump) shows extras.

Here are examples illustrating the usefulness of Good-Bad 2NT:

West	North	East	You
1♥	2♦	2♥	??

♠ Kxx  
♥ Axx  
♦ Q109x  
♣ xxx

Here, you can bid three diamonds and partner will know that you have a *good* three-diamond raise. If you held only ♠ xxx ♥ Axx ♦ Q10xx ♣ xxx, you would bid two notrump, forcing partner to bid three clubs. Now when you correct to three diamonds, partner will know that you have a minimum raise.

West	North	East	You
---	---	---	1♥
2♣	Pass	2♠	??

♠ x  
♥ AKQxx  
♦ AKJxx  
♣ xx

Bid three diamonds and partner will know that you have a good hand (you didn't bid two notrump first). If instead, you held ♠ x ♥ Axxxx ♦ AKJxx ♣ xx, you'd bid two notrump, then three diamonds after partner's forced three-club bid.

West	North	East	You
---	---	---	1♥
1♠	1NT	2♠	??

♠ xx  
♥ AKJ10xxx  
♦ Kxx  
♣ x

An easy two-notrump bid - partner won't play you for an 18-count when you pull his three-club relay to three hearts. If you held ♠ Kx ♥ AKJ10xxx ♦ Kxx ♣ x, you would bid three hearts directly.

West	North	East	You
---	---	---	1♦
1♠	Dbl	2♠	??

♠ xx  
♥ KJ10x  
♦ AKxxx  
♣ xx

In Standard, you'd feel uncomfortable bidding a free three hearts. But you can't leave the opponents in their eight-card fit on the two level. Playing Good-Bad, you bid two notrump, followed by three hearts, to let partner know that you have a minimum

The number of auctions in which this two-notrump option is available is staggering. However, we've found that in some situations it doesn't make sense to play it. Any serious partnership should take a little time to discuss when it should or should not apply. Some of the exceptions, discussed in *Better Bidding With Bergen*, are the following:

- 1) When two notrump would clearly be Unusual
- 2) When either side has opened one notrump
- 3) When the opponents have opened with a big club
- 4) When the opponents make a penalty double
- 5) When we have already found a fit
- 6) When we are already in a game forcing auction

Even if you choose not to discuss exceptions, you do have to use a little common sense. Let's say your partner opens one diamond, they bid one heart, and you make a negative double holding

♠ A x x x   ♥ A x   ♦ x x x   ♣ A J x x.

They raise to two hearts and your partner bids 2NT Good-Bad. He's probably got a weak three-club bid or a weak three-diamond bid. You certainly can't afford to bid three clubs since he will pass if he has clubs! So, you simply bid three hearts and partner will know you have a good hand.

Look how easy it becomes to handle situations like the following: You hold

♠ A x   ♥ A x x x   ♦ J 10 x x   ♣ x x x.

<b>You</b>	<b>LHO</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>RHO</b>
---	---	1♦	1♠
Dbl	2♠	3♥	Pass
??			

You made a negative double and heard partner bid three hearts over their raise to two spades. You know that partner has a good hand since he didn't bid two notrump. So, you can comfortably raise to game. If partner held only

♠ K x   ♥ K Q x x   ♦ K Q x x   ♣ J x x,

he would not have bid a direct three hearts. He would have started with two notrump, and you would bid three diamonds (no reason to bid three clubs since, if he has diamonds and clubs, you would prefer to play in diamonds). Now, when he bids three hearts, you can pass without worrying that you're missing a game.

Using Good-Bad 2NT, you will be able to compete quite effectively when the opponents find their fit on the two level - and that's what the LAW wants you to do! You certainly will not suffer from the lack of a natural two notrump bid - it's not a bid you really need. Telling your partner whether you have a *good* or a *bad* three-level bid is a much more useful piece of information to convey.