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The Card Game

The hero of a popular movie last year espoused the wisdom that “*life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you are going to get.*”

This caused me to reflect about other analogies that offer insight into “*life.*” “*Life is like a bowl of cherries*” is another classic, implying, I always supposed, that life is wonderful. Upon further reflection, I came to consider that the life-cherry relationship may represent that life is beautiful, that it can be either sweet or sour, but overall, it is satisfying. Several years ago, some wit appended this analogy with the self-pitying (no pun) question: “*Why do I always end up with the pits.*”

I have often thought that another analogy, “*life is like a poker game,*” was a particularly powerful insight, implying that, like the box of chocolates, you do not know what you will get. However, the analogy lends itself to further interpretation: It has always seemed to me that while getting good cards offers an advantage, the overall result you achieve depends on how well you play the cards dealt to you.

Different players with the same cards will get different results: Some will win; some will lose. Some decisions are based on what another player does first, or in response to our behavior. However, no “hand” is without risks. It is not like the box of chocolates: simply a situation in which the next piece of chocolate may be different, better or worse than what we have now. Each game offers new chances, new risks, new prizes to be won.

Before we put our hopes on the next hand, however, we should spend some more time thinking about the cards we have now. “*Let’s see, what shall I do? Should I keep these cards? Should I raise the bet? Should I ask for new cards?*” *Perhaps what I have is not so bad after all.*

Yes, life can be like a poker game. Are we doing the best we can with the cards we have been dealt?

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