

Table 5.1

Comparing Two Kinds of Conditioning

| OPERANT CONDITIONING | CLASSICAL CONDITIONING |
|---|---|
| End result is an increase in the rate of an already occurring response. | End result is the creation of a new response to a stimulus that did not normally produce that response. |
| Responses are voluntary, emitted by the organism. | Responses are involuntary and automatic, elicited by a stimulus. |
| Consequences are important in forming an association. | Antecedent stimuli are important in forming an association. |
| Reinforcement should be immediate. | CS must occur immediately before the UCS. |
| An expectancy develops for reinforcement to follow a correct response. | An expectancy develops for UCS to follow CS. |

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT Reinforcers can also differ in the way they are used. Most people have no trouble at all understanding that following a response with some kind of pleasurable consequence (like a reward) will lead to an increase in the likelihood of that response being repeated. This is called **positive reinforcement**, the reinforcement of a response by the *addition* or experience of a pleasurable consequence, such as a reward or a pat on the back. But many people have trouble understanding that the opposite is also true: Following a response with *the removal or escape* from something *unpleasant* will also increase the likelihood of that response being repeated—a process called **negative reinforcement**. Remember the idea that pain can be a reinforcer if it is removed? If a person's behavior gets pain to stop, the person is much more likely to do that same thing again—which is part of the reason people can get addicted to painkilling medication. (We'll discuss the concepts of positive and negative reinforcement in more detail later on.)

We've discussed what reinforcement is and how it affects the behavior that follows the reinforcement. In the next section we'll discuss the different ways in which reinforcement can be administered as well as the difference between reinforcement and punishment. We'll also look at the role of the stimuli that come *before* the behavior that is to be reinforced and a few other operant conditioning concepts.

