Basic Forms of Learning

- Learning – a relatively enduring change in behavior as a result of previous experience.
- The most basic forms of learning occur automatically, subconsciously – without any particular effort on our part.
- 2 forms of basic learning or “conditioning” involve learning associations between environmental events or stimuli and our behavioral responses.

Classical Conditioning

- We automatically learn what stimuli are usually associated with situations that demand a reflexive bodily or emotional response. Those stimuli come to trigger the body’s response.
- Classical conditioning is useful because learning to predict what’s coming allows the body to get ready ahead of time.

Evidence of Learning

- After repeated pairings, Bell Ringing (on its own) produced salivation.
- That response (e.g. salivating to the sound of a bell) would never occur if learning had not taken place. It is a “conditioned (learned) response” (CR).

Classical conditioning is not just about drooling dogs – it’s the basis for all sorts of learned (conditioned) bodily and emotional responses as well.
Acquisition, Extinction & Recovery of a Classically Conditioned Response

Example: Consider the Emotional & Sexual Responses You Develop to Your Partner

John B. Watson
- And the tale of Little Albert
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt0ucxOrPQE

Remember:
- Classical conditioning always begins with a stimulus (UCS) that triggers an unavoidable reflexive or emotional response of the body (UCR)
- Other neutral stimuli that regularly precede or accompany the UCS register in memory.
- Then those stimuli become CS for a learned response (CR) similar to original UCR.

Classical Conditioning Occurs in Just About Every Species
- Presenting a smell with sucrose→learned extension of proboscis to smell alone

Much of advertising is based on trying to build an association between a product and a UCS that naturally triggers a positive body response.