

3.22.21 - Pavlov's Dogs

The following is an excerpt from an article titled "Pavlov's Dogs and Discovery of Classical Conditioning" from the website www.VeryWellMind.com

Pavlov's dog experiments played a critical role in the discovery of one of the most important concepts in psychology. While it was originally discovered quite by accident, these famous experiments led to the discovery of classical conditioning. This discovery had a major impact on our understanding of how learning takes place as well as the development of the school of behavioral psychology.

Pavlov's Dog: A Background

How did experiments on the digestive response in dogs lead to one of the most important discoveries in psychology? Ivan Pavlov was a noted Russian physiologist who went on to win the 1904 Nobel Prize for his work studying digestive processes.

It was while studying digestion in dogs that Pavlov noted an interesting occurrence: His canine subjects would begin to salivate whenever an assistant entered the room.

The concept of classical conditioning is studied by every entry-level psychology student, so it may be surprising to learn that the man who first noted this phenomenon was not a psychologist at all.

In his digestive research, Pavlov and his assistants would introduce a variety of edible and non-edible items and measure the saliva production that the items produced. Salivation, he noted, is a reflexive process. It occurs automatically in response to a specific stimulus and is not under conscious control.

However, Pavlov noted that the dogs would often begin salivating in the absence of food and smell. He quickly realized that this salivary response was not due to an automatic, physiological process.

Classical Conditioning Theory

Based on his observations, Pavlov suggested that the salivation was a learned response. The dogs were responding to the sight of the research assistants' white lab coats, which the animals had come to associate with the presentation of food.

Unlike the salivary response to the presentation of food, which is an unconditioned reflex, salivating to the expectation of food is a conditioned reflex.

Pavlov then focused on investigating exactly how these conditioned responses are learned or acquired. In a series of experiments, Pavlov set out to provoke a conditioned response to a previously neutral stimulus. He opted to use food as the unconditioned stimulus, or the stimulus that evokes a response naturally and automatically.

The sound of a metronome was chosen to be the neutral stimulus. The dogs would first be exposed to the sound of the ticking metronome, and then the food was immediately presented.

After several conditioning trials, Pavlov noted that the dogs began to salivate after hearing the metronome. "A stimulus which was neutral in and of itself had been superimposed upon the action of the inborn alimentary reflex," Pavlov wrote of the results.

"We observed that, after several repetitions of the combined stimulation, the sounds of the metronome had acquired the property of stimulating salivary secretion." In other words, the previously neutral stimulus (the metronome) had become what is known as a conditioned stimulus that then provoked a conditioned response (salivation).

Impact of Pavlov's Research

Pavlov's discovery of classical conditioning remains one of the most important in psychology's history.

In addition to forming the basis of what would become behavioral psychology, the classical conditioning process remains important today for numerous applications, including behavioral modification and mental health treatment, including treating phobias, anxiety, and panic disorders.

Pavlov's work has also inspired research on how to apply classical conditioning principles to taste aversions. The principles have been used to prevent coyotes from preying on domestic livestock and to use neutral stimulus (eating some type of food) paired with an unconditioned response (negative results after eating the food) to create an aversion to a particular food.

So, what does this have to do with naturism? EVERYTHING!!!

Because of today's society mainly being naked for sex we have created a "conditioned response." I almost can't believe that there aren't research papers a mile high, studying this phenomenon today. Pavlov would be truly disappointed, and he wasn't even a psychologist. We have so associated nudity with sex that every time a person is nude most people's immediate reaction is sexual. Most people that is, except for naturists.

What if that could all be changed? What if it could be undone? What if we could reprogram the response to be nonsexual in nature? What if we could truly help someone be free from the bondage of pornography? What if we could truly help the sex addict find freedom?

Pavlov proved that we can! Classical Conditioning Theory proves that we can! Biblical Naturism proves that we can!

The more I study this area, the more I find that the Bible is right all along...that doing something God's way is always better even if it goes against societal norms and traditional religious dogma. The religious leaders of today are teaching to hide the image of God in shame, to cover it like it is somehow dirty and ugly and gross. Where did this idea come from? It is not found anywhere in the Scriptures...I've looked. Myself and others like me have studied from Genesis to maps and the idea that the body that God created naked and not ashamed...that He called "very good" is somehow no longer bearing the image of God simply is not in the Bible. The verses used to teach "modesty" were not referring to the amount of clothing one had on and this fact is easily discovered with a simple study of the meanings and context of the words used. To claim otherwise is intentionally misleading if one has actually done the research.

The result of this religious, but biblically incorrect teaching has been to condition a sexual response to simple nakedness. Something our Creator never intended. God

created Adam and Eve naked and not ashamed. He then placed them in the Garden of Eden to “dress it and keep it.” They were naked all day every day and were doing normal everyday things in the garden...they were dressing and keeping the garden of God. Sexual response was an emotional response not simply a triggered reaction by being near someone of the opposite gender without clothing on. Some would posit the idea that since God provided protection from the elements upon Adam and Eve’s departure from the Garden is a sign that we are to now clothe. If that were the case the Bible would be full of examples and instructions on never being naked again. Instead we find the opposite...King David, King Saul, Job, Isaiah, the Prophets, the Levite Priests, the workers in the fields, the bathers at the river, Blind Bartimaeus, Peter fishing, Jesus at the Last Supper, the worshippers at the Mount of Olives at the Triumphal Entry and so many more examples...all with absolutely zero condemnation in the scripture and in fact so many of them at the command or leading of God and the Holy Spirit.

What we have found is that the religious training of the day only enforces the Pavlovian Response. Rather than providing the cure, religion is enforcing and edifying the problem.

What needs to happen is that we need to make non-sexual nudity commonplace wherever legal and whenever possible thus eliminating the sexual response. We undo the white coat salivation...the metronome salivation and just like teaching the coyote to not attack the sheep we teach the human to not associate nakedness with sex. Now nakedness is associated with vacuuming and gardening and doing laundry and taking a hike in the woods and swimming and dining, etc.

Oh, and the good news is that by doing so we restore the naked body to its position of honor as God intended instead of the position that religious leaders are advocating which is one of disgust and perversion and shame. We place the image of God back in its proper place of bringing honor and glory to its Creator rather than pleasing the one who hates God’s image and His creation.

We call that a Win-Win!