CHAPTER XI: Learning

WHAT IS LEARNING?
❖ A lasting change in behavior or mental processes that results from experience is defined as *learning*;
➤ learning not to respond to the repeated presentation of a stimulus is to create a habit, or *habituation*
➤ a learned preference for stimuli to which we have been previously exposed is the *mere exposure effect*
➤ forms of learning such as classical conditioning and operant conditioning, that can be described in terms of stimuli and responses is *behavioral learning*

THE ESSENTIALS OF CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

**Classical conditioning is a form of behavioral learning in which a previously neutral stimulus, or any stimulus that produces no conditioned response prior to learning, acquires the power to elicit the same innate reflex produced by another stimulus**

❖ **Acquisition** is the initial learning stage in classical conditioning, during which the conditioned response comes to be elicited by the conditioned stimulus
➤ *Conditioned stimulus (CS)*
■ a previously neutral stimulus that comes to elicit the conditioned response; customarily in a conditioning experiment the neutral stimulus is called a CS
➤ *Unconditioned stimulus (UCS)*
■ the stimulus that elicits an unconditioned response; no learning
➤ *Conditioned response (CR)*
■ a response elicited by a previously neutral stimulus that has become associated with the unconditioned stimulus
➤ *Unconditioned response (UCR)*
■ the response elicited by an unconditioned stimulus without prior learning

❖ **Extinction (in classical conditioning)** is the weakening of a conditioned response in the absence of an unconditioned stimulus
➤ the reappearance of an extinguished conditioned response after a time delay is called *spontaneous recovery*

❖ **Stimulus generalization** is the extension of a learned response to stimuli that are similar to the conditioned stimulus
❖ **Stimulus discrimination** is a change in response to one stimulus but not to stimuli that are similar
❖ **Experimental neurosis** is a pattern or erratic behavior resulting from a demanding discrimination learning task, typically one that involves aversive stimuli
❖ **Taste-aversion learning** is how organisms learn what food to avoid through experience