Operant Conditioning And Self Destructive Behaviours

Operant conditioning is a form of learning in which responses come to be controlled by their consequences as mentioned by (Weiten Briefer 9e). It goes on to say that these patterns of behaviour are elicited by environmental stimuli.

This form of behaviour can be controlled by decreasing an old habit by adopting a new habit or behaviour in hopes of eliminating the undesired habit. With effort, repeatedly practicing this new habit for a long period of time can eventually conquer the bad behaviour. Especially if this bad behaviour is dangerous to the person or the community at large.

There are many examples of self-destructive behaviours that humans have adopted throughout time. Today we will focus on one and that is the use or consumption of alcohol, we will discuss the effects it has on many people, why they engage in it and how it can be unlearned using the theory of operant conditioning.

Why do humans consume alcohol?

Studies show that alcohol was first introduced to humans eighty million years ago when people occasionally ate rotting fermented fruit that was rich in ethanol. The Archeological record on Wikipedia says that in 2018 the world's oldest brewery was discovered, researchers found residue of thirteen thousand-year-old beer.

This shows how long the habit of alcohol consumption has been going on all through human history and how deeply entrenched these habits are. As soon as humans found out about the temporary free state of mind people experience when intoxicated, it become a go-to drink for people for different reasons. Some use it for entailment others to simply forget the problems they have in their lives. Unfortunately, many people cannot decide how much is too much for them and as a result dependency on alcohol was invented.

The alarming rate of the number of people who depend on alcohol increases every year and as a result, a lot of people have been affected by it in some way or another regardless of whether they are active or passive users of alcohol. Since alcohol is a worldwide problem and it's definitely a habit that a lot of people can live without, we are going to discuss why it is dangerous to us and also how we can find practical ways on how we can unlearn it.

Alcohol when consumed beyond the average limit can have dire consequences on the human body, the parts of the human body it affects help us to see how dangerous it is. This knowledge can be a real eye-opener to people who depend on alcohol.

The Human Body

According to the Hazelden Betty Ford website, Alcohol has complete control of our brain because it says ' Alcohol affects the complex structures of the brain. It blocks chemical signals between brain cells (called neurons), leading to the common immediate symptoms of intoxication, including impulsive behavior, slurred speech, poor memory, and slowed reflexes.'

This means when intoxicated alcohol controls everything we do, how we walk, talk, or even what we see is all controlled by it. That is a lot of power to give to something that is nonliving.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism website says that an estimated sixty-two thousand(men) and twenty-six thousand (women) die from alcohol-related causes every year. Making Alcohol the third leading preventable cause of death in America.

Apart from death studies show that alcohol causes life-threatening health problems, a major factor in broken homes and broken marriages. For many people who are products of these lifestyles the emotional scars that they carry with them are permanent. In other words, alcohol destroys communities. We have discussed the origin of alcohol, the dependency that people have developed on it, and the sad consequences it has brought to many families and the thousands of people that die from it. We will see how we use the operant condition to unlearn alcoholism.

Self-control

A lot of us can avoid many habits if we knew how to have self-control. Self-control is the art of not giving in to our urges or simply not jumping to every whim that crosses our minds. The sad part is although self-control takes a great amount of effort and time to me cultivated the good news is according to the introduction of chapter 6 of the (Weiten and Mcann textbook) we can learn to have self-control. The book further explains that everything we know in our lives we have learned at some point.

Also, our addictions are a result of an issue that we have not dealt with. So understanding why we are dependent on alcohol gives us a clear picture of where the problem is.

Association

How fast we can unlearn a habit lies greatly on whom we spend most of our time with, friends or family have a great influence on us more than we realize, spending time with people who encourage good habits increases our chances of neglecting bad habits.

Last but not least, it's pointless to apply all these suggestions if we don't have a desire to change, or admit that we have a problem. Honesty with our weaknesses gives us more insight into where to start nipping the cause at the bud and how we can get help. It is possible to unlearn negative habits if we are patient and determined.