CLASSICAL OR OPERANT CONDITIONING?

In each of the following descriptions of learning situations, you are asked to identify whether classical or operant conditioning applies to the underlined behavior. Further, you are asked to determine what learning principle(s) seem relevant.

**Instructions**
1. If you decide the situation seems to be an example of classical conditioning, you should label the UCS (Unconditioned stimulus), UCR (Unconditioned response), CS (Conditioned stimulus), and CR (conditioned response).
2. If you decide the situation seems to be an example of operant conditioning, you should decide which of the following principles best fits:
   A. Positive reinforcement
   B. Negative reinforcement (designate whether it is by *escape* or *avoidance*)
   C. Positive punishment (Punishment by Application)
   D. Negative punishment (Punishment by Removal)

After Reading the Scenario, Ask Yourself:
Is the behavior or response the animal/person is doing voluntary or involuntary/reflexive?
- If voluntary - OC
- If involuntary/reflexive - CC

**IF OPERANT CONDITIONING:**
- What was the consequence for their behavior?
- Will it make them more or less likely to do the behavior again?
  - More - Reinforcement
  - Less - Punishment
  - Something taken away - Negative
  - Something added - Positive

REMEMBER: An absence of a behavior (being lazy) is NOT considered a behavior by OC. You can't stop a person from doing nothing, you can only *motivate* them to DO something with reinforcement.

**IF CLASSICAL CONDITIONING:**
Ask yourself what is the behavior (CR) and what is the person doing the behavior in response to? (CS)
What originally caused them to do that behavior? Original cause = UCS, Behavior = UCR

**Scene 1**
A very bright (mildly painful) light is turned on a rat. The rat has learned that he can turn off the light by pressing a lever on the other side of his cage. As soon as the light comes on, the rat runs across the cage and presses the lever.

**OPERANT CONDITIONING**
Negative Reinforcement by Escape – Rat escapes the painful light by turning it off with the lever.

**Scene 2**
When a mother strokes he infant’s skin, the stroking creates a pleasure in the baby. After this goes on for many days, the baby begins to show pleasure in responses simply at the sight of the mother (before even being touched).

**CLASSICAL CONDITIONING**
US = Stroking of infant’s skin
UR = Pleasant response
CS = Seeing Mom
CR = Pleasant response

**Scene 3**
A patient in a mental hospital is very disruptive at mealtimes. She grabs food from the plates of those sitting near her and tries to cram the food in her mouth. Because this behavior of stealing food is very undesirable, a plan is developed whereby every time the patient steals food from other plates, she is immediately taken to a room without food.

**OPERANT CONDITIONING**
Negative Punishment by Removal – Patient is removed from something they like – eating food.
Scene 4  
Johnny has gotten into a habit of yelling “Bye, Mom” and then slamming the door very loudly in his hurry to leave for school in the morning. The door slam causes his mother to flinch. After several days of procedure, Johnny’s mother begins to flinch at the sound of her son’s word, “Bye, Mom.”

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING  
US = Slamming the door  
UR = Mother flinching  
CS = Sound of “Bye Mom”  
CR = Mother Flinching

Scene 5  
Imagine you have a friend who keeps the temperature in her home so high that each occasion in which you visit her, you find yourself perspiring. The last time you visited her, you noticed that you began to perspire and became uncomfortable as soon as you saw her house (before you even got inside).

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING  
US = High Temperatures  
UR = Perspiration  
CS = Sight of her house  
CR = Perspiration

Scene 6  
Fred leaves his clothes and toys all over the room & never cleans up. It seems that the only time he cleans up his room is when his mother yells at him. Whenever she starts yelling at him, Fred picks up his clothes and puts away his toys.

OPERANT CONDITIONING  
Negative Reinforcement by Escape – Fred is escaping the yelling of his mom by cleaning up his room.

Scene 7  
Mr. and Mrs. Jones are having a heated argument that both are finding very unpleasant. Mr. Jones gets up and leaves the room, closing the door behind him. This has the effect of terminating the argument. From then on, every time Mrs. Jones raises her voice, Mr. Jones leaves the room.

OPERANT CONDITIONING  
Negative Reinforcement by Avoidance – Leaving the room removes the aversive stimulus (the argument)

Scene 8  
A husband who usually ignores his wife still likes to think of himself as an understanding man. So, whenever his wife complains that her heart condition (which has no medical cause) is giving her pain, he becomes attentive and tries to comfort her. This responsiveness doesn’t seem to help much; her complaints of heart trouble just increase.

OPERANT CONDITIONING  
Positive Reinforcement: She is trying to increase the response (her husband comforting her) by presenting the behavior of complaining of having heart pain.