you have a positive attitude toward the former and a negative attitude toward the latter. Why? In large part, it’s because you have been reinforced for holding these attitudes. You received positive reinforcement when you shared and were punished when you took something that didn’t belong to you. You may also have witnessed another person being rewarded for sharing or punished for stealing. Because learning also takes place through observation and modeling (Bandura & Walters, 1963), these vicarious experiences can influence attitude formation.

Verbal agreement from another person constitutes another form of reinforcement. We are gratified when another person agrees with us and displeased when he or she disagrees with us. To see whether verbal reinforcement influences attitudes, Insko and Cialdini (1969) conducted a field experiment (see Chapter 1). Participants were called on the phone and asked their opinions about an issue of the day (pay TV). Using random assignment to conditions, the researchers reinforced some participants for expressing positive attitudes toward pay TV (the experimenter said “Good” whenever participants expressed support for the issue and “Humph” in a disapproving manner whenever they expressed opposition). Other participants received the opposite reinforcement schedule (they were reinforced for making negative statements, not positive ones). Finally, the researchers assessed the participants’ attitudes toward pay TV. They found that respondents who were selectively reinforced for expressing positive opinions toward pay TV subsequently expressed more positive attitudes toward the issue than did those who were reinforced for expressing negative opinions. Moreover, the participants were not aware of the power of the reinforcement. When asked later, few of the participants indicated that they had noticed the subtle reinforcement they had received.

Classical Conditioning of Attitudes. Instrumental learning of attitudes occurs when a behavioral or verbal response is selectively reinforced. Attitude formation can also occur through principles of classical conditioning (Staats & Staats, 1958; Walther, 2002; Zanna, Kiesler, & Pilkonis, 1970). Unlike instrumental learning, classical conditioning does not require an initial response. Advertisers often rely on principles of classical conditioning to sell their wares. Sunny skies, sex appeal, friendship, and excitement are paired with soft drinks, cigarettes, deodorants, and cars. Why? Because the advertisers hope that the good feelings elicited by these intrinsically positive stimuli will transfer to the products they are selling (see Figure 6.2). Notice how the aim

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**FIGURE 6.2**

Classical Conditioning of Attitudes

Attractive models in advertisements evoke positive feelings, and these feelings are transferred to the product being advertised.