

"Good watch prevents misfortune." -- English proverb
"A moment of carelessness can cause a lifetime of regret."



What is Alertness?

"Alertness" means to "be on the watch or lookout, vigilantly ready." It is the ability to be aware of circumstances around us even though we are focused on a specific task. Our minds can give conscious attention to only a few of the many details that come to us, so it suppresses some of them.

The habit of being alert can be developed. We learn to glance at our car's fuel, temperature, and oil gauges periodically as we are driving. As we become experienced drivers, we learn to notice warnings from other drivers' errant behavior about potential accidents. In other words, we learn to drive defensively. We can become sensitive to the tensions and needs of those around us so that conflict can be avoided. Our ears begin to pick up sounds of machinery and electronic equipment that may warn of malfunctioning.

Anticipating our reactions to potential problems and planning our actions in advance can keep us from harmful "knee jerk" reactions.

If we continually repress the warning around us, we may cease to be aware of those signals that could help us avoid trouble. We can use hindsight to analyze the warning signals we have ignored and gain more alertness for the future through our past mistakes.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you noticed a person showing alertness to the needs of others around them recently? Describe their actions.
2. What prevents you from being alert to potentially harmful situations around you?
3. How can you correct that lack of alertness?
4. In retrospect, can you identify some of the warning signals that a problem might be developing in your home or workplace that could have been prevented? What response to those signals would you make today?
5. Is there someone you should thank for being alert to your needs?
6. How could alertness to the needs of those around you improve relationships in your home or workplace?



Defensive Driving

Good defensive driving practices always involve alertness and advance planning to avoid accidents. Here are some examples:

- spotting children kicking a ball near the road and slowing and checking your mirror and side spaces to see where you might safely swerve if a child should run into the road.
- pausing when your light turns green and looking down the cross road to be sure no-one is going to run their red light.
- Seeing a pool of water on the road, slowing and checking mirrors to see if it is safe to swerve to avoid it.

Featuring this month~

Alertness vs. Carelessness

"Being aware of what is taking place around me so I can have the right responses."

I will:

- ◆ Keep my eyes and ears open.
- ◆ Recognize and heed warning signals.
- ◆ Choose to do right before I'm tempted.
- ◆ Tell others of danger.
- ◆ Stay away from unsafe places.

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"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."
-- Thomas Jefferson



The Ring-necked Pheasant

The Ring-necked pheasant has keen eyesight and hearing and is alert to the potential attacks of predators. It survives by being able to fly suddenly and vertically at a great speed. The rush of wings startles a predator, thereby obtaining valuable time for the pheasant to gain altitude.



Be Prepared!

1. Have safety equipment ready for common tasks.
2. Know first aid and keep a well-stocked first aid kit on hand.
3. Have contact information and medical data for emergencies on file for those you work with.
4. Know where the nearest emergency room is to your home or workplace.
5. Maintain equipment, such as car brakes and tires.

"Why not err on the side of caution?"

Parents - [Click here](#) for tips on encouraging your children to develop the character quality this month.

Check out the [Just for Kids](#) pages for wisdom in a nature analogy and a historical lesson.