



Alertness gives us warning of approaching dangers and notice of emerging opportunities. It refers to a person's awareness of circumstances beyond immediate focus – circumstances which may modify the situation such as a supply shortage, machine maintenance, or technological advances. People who are not alert are more likely to be caught by surprise and overwhelmed by problems that could have been resolved if only the problem had not gone unnoticed for so long.



## What is Alertness?

*Being aware of what is taking place around me so I can respond appropriately.*

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**CORE**  
BY STRATA LEADERSHIP

Alertness is keeping your eyes – and all your other senses – tuned to notice the world around you. Perhaps there is something out of place, out of the ordinary, or just something needing your attention.

**Opposite:** careless, dull, foolish, unaware, thoughtless, slow, asleep, indifferent, inattentive

**Related Concepts:** vigilant, bright, careful, observant, watchful, wise, heads up, sharp, perceptive, wary, wide-awake, with it

**Summary:** Being tuned into your surroundings.



*“More firm and sure the hand of courage strikes, when it obeys the watchful eye of caution.”*

—James Thomson

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**James Thomson** (September 11, 1700 – August 27, 1748) was a Scottish poet who later travelled to Great Britain.

**Other Alertness Quotes:**

“When you take your attention into the present moment, a certain alertness arises. You become more conscious of what’s around you, but also, strangely, a sense of presence that is both within and without.”

—Eckhart Tolle

“The first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance.”

—Nathaniel Branden

“Look at everything always as though you were seeing it either for the first or last time: Thus is your time on earth filled with glory.”

—Betty Smith

“Be present in all things and thankful for all things.”

—Maya Angelou

“There are times when fear is good. It must keep its watchful place at the heart’s controls.”

—Aeschylus

“The difference between being a victim and a survivor is often a low level of situational awareness. You can’t be a super-spy, watchful and paranoid every day. But I am more watchful than the average American.”

—Barry Eisler

“As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do.”

—Andrew Carnegie

“Successful people are always looking for opportunities to help others. Unsuccessful people are always asking, ‘What’s in it for me?’”

—Brian Tracy

“As a goalkeeper you need to be good at organising the people in front of you and motivating them. You need to see what’s going on and react to the threats. Just like a good manager in business.”

—Peter Shilton



# 1. Keep Your Eyes Open

People who are alert notice when things seem different, potentially threatening, or just need improvement.

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Alert individuals are always aware of what is going on around them. They notice when things seem different, potentially threatening, or just need improvement. They are also alert to potentially dangerous issues such as unlocked doors that need to remain secure and opportunities such as a new market for products that is opening.



## 2. Act Immediately

Take care of what you notice. By doing so you help others around you.

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Taking care of those things you notice will help those around you. We can actually become more alert by practicing looking around and taking action. Being considerate of others and their safety and convenience is one part of the equation, but it is important to act.



### 3. Analyze the Results

Learn from successes and from mistakes.

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Learn from life. It is not enough to merely witness an event, opportunity, or trend – alertness requires us to see applications and comprehend implications. By gaining valuable insight into successes and failures, we can respond better to future situations.



# Discussion Starters

1. How can being alert save people from getting hurt, prevent issues with quality control, and save the company money?
2. When you have noticed something that needed attention, what did you do?
3. How can you learn from successes and failures?

## **Additional Alertness Discussion Starters:**

What opportunities do you have, in your job, to be alert?

When have you noticed something that needed attention?

If you notice a quality control issue, or a safety concern, who can you talk to?

What can happen if you do not take action once you notice something?

What can you do to become more alert?

When was a time you learned from another person's success or failure? When was a time that you learned from your own?

Why is it important to learn from our experiences and the experiences of others?

How does an alert worker help the business and the bottom line?

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