**Thinking as Writing: Clarity, Exactness, Awareness, Richness**

*Quote: Print allows you to hold another’s mind in your hand.*

—JAMES BURKE

Writing does more than mirror our mind. It can clarify it, sharpen our thinking, and enrich our mind with an understanding that was not there before we wrote. Clarity is a gift writing gives to our thinking. “We do not write in order to be understood, we write in order to understand,” said C. Day Lewis. Although many of us can “think on our feet,” few humans can continually think crystal clearly. Our brains rarely function continually at a high level of clarity. With writing we have a chance to achieve some of that clarity. We can put our thinking on paper and excise the ambiguity. This sentence, for instance, has been reworked until several readers approved of its clarity. And this clarity achieved in writing might even influence the type of person we are becoming: Francis Bacon tells us that writing makes an “exact” person. Besides bringing clarity and exactness to our thinking, writing can intensify our physical and mental awareness. Just the attempt to describe what we are seeing, feeling, and thinking can allow us to see sharply, feel deeply, and think more clearly.

Writing then, can mirror the mind; focus it into a state of clarity, and present new awareness’s. Beyond these gifts, writing offers another rich gift that is a paradox: When we pour water out of a glass, we are emptying the glass, but when we pour thoughts out of our mind onto paper, we are filling our mind. As we assemble those thoughts into a new written structure, we are writing a new combination of words that was not in our mind before we wrote it down; hence, this powerful paradox: As we write something we create it both on the paper and in our mind. Thus, as we write we grow richer.