



Shakti Butler

Dr. Shakti Butler is a multiracial African-American woman (African, Arawak Indian, and Russian-Jewish) whose work as a creative and visionary bridge builder has challenged and inspired learning for over two decades. She is frequently hired by organizations seeking a catalyst for change.

Butler is the producer and director of groundbreaking documentaries including, *The Way Home*, *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible*, and her film in production *Cracking the Codes of Racial Inequity*. This latest film uses story, theater and music to illuminate the larger frame of structural/systemic racial inequity. [See clips of her films here.](#)

Dr. Butler shares her holistic framework for conveying the interconnection between internal/personal and external/structural components of racial inequity, and revealing how self-perpetuating systems reinforce disparities in institutions. This framing, along with the use of Butler's films, set the context for constructive conversation. Her work invites her audience to grapple with both the intellectual and emotional complexities of the issue. Butler inspires a collective will and develops deeper, cohesive understanding that can be directly applied to analysis and action.

Butler is an inspirational facilitator, trainer and lecturer. Her work emerges from years of self-exploration and her commitment to social justice. Dr. Butler's services are sought after by schools, universities, public and private organizations, and faith-based institutions.

A warm and compassionate person, Butler uses her ability to listen deeply while asking critical questions that support self-directed learning in others. Her speaking and teaching styles enrich people's abilities to expand their capacities for building community, an important first step in effecting change. Group dialogue, self-inquiry, reflection and whole body learning by participants are some of the strategies she employs.

Dr. Butler is executive director of World Trust Educational Services. She received her doctorate from the California Institute of Integral Studies in the School of Transformative Learning and Change. She holds an MA in Guidance and Counseling from Bank Street College of New York and graduated *magna cum laude* from City College of New York.

What People Are Saying About Shakti Butler...

"Dr. Butler has a way of educating her audience that is powerful, engaging, and even enchanting. She asks people to think critically but to forgive and to confront confidently. She encourages shifts in paradigms without judgment, rather with intellectual and emotional awareness. We learned that building social justice within our industry requires critical and consistent analysis of a system rather than isolated cogs in the wheel of diversity initiatives. I had a very powerful experience with my colleagues."

- Anne Burnett, Director of Programs, Nature Bridge, Marin County, CA

"Shakti Butler understands herself as a facilitator. She began by centering the group in its values, recalling us to our best selves. By the time we watched her excellent film, the group was prepared to be open to new ways of thinking, higher levels of hope, and greater depths of trust. While I experienced a sense of confession and awareness of complicity in a larger system of oppression, I did not leave with the paralysis of guilt. Rather, through talking with my small group of humble, creative, and soulful white people, I left the day hopeful."

- Rev. Jake Morrill, Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church, Tennessee

"What I think is most notable are the many conversations that your presentation initiated and that we all observed going on at meals and during breaks for the rest of the session. You made an impact that will last far beyond this session."

- Hoke Simpson, President, The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

"Shakti Butler is a master of helping people look deeply into themselves to reflect and excavate what we'd rather not see. She brings such compassion and humility to her work."

- Marcia Rayen, Workshop Participant

The audience participants raved about both the content *and* the conditions that Ms. Butler created for the exploration and analysis of these often-taboo topics."

- Dr. Melanie Tervalon, Consultant Children's Hospital, Oakland; University of California, Berkeley

"Our seminar with Dr. Butler was without a doubt the highlight for us this year. We were incredibly moved and impressed by her work, and it has already had a big impact on our everyday work. We now have a deeper understanding of ourselves and the people we serve. She opened up so much for us...."

- Lessy Benedith, Director, St. Vincent DePaul Society

"Dr. Butler's keynote was fun, energetic, thought provoking and easily accessible. She has the ability to engage everyone in the audience. They were excited, crying, thinking/processing and still talking long after the keynote was over. It was what we needed at the conference -- a balanced diet of intelligence, community, youthful energy, love and action."

- Eddie Moore, Jr., Founder, White Privilege Conference

Workshops & Presentations with Shakti Butler

Shakti Butler is skilled at applying her expertise to address the unique needs of her varied clients. Workshops are generally one to two days in length. Clients ranging from UC Berkeley to the City of Seattle, from the YWCA to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America have hired her to:

- Break down barriers, initiate communication to deal with "the elephant in the room"
- Create a more welcoming, culturally conscious campus, congregation, or community
- Initiate efforts to address, transform and build efforts for racial justice
- Deepen the framing of racial justice
- Build leaderships skills
- Build the collective will for change

Shorter presentations and keynotes that introduce concepts and begin the conversation are also available in person or via Skype including:

Irresistible Justice: Cultivating Joy as a Radical Act for Social Change

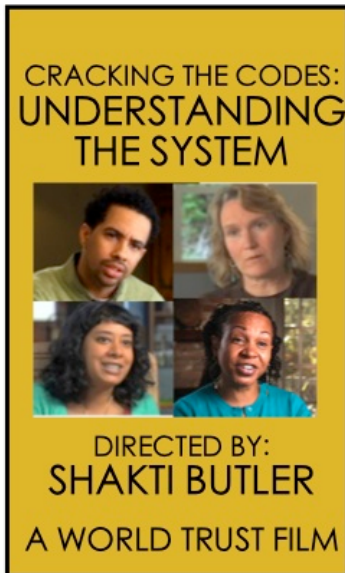
This session uses clips from World Trust's current film project, *Cracking the Codes: Race & Relationships in the 21st Century* as a catalyst for transformative learning, and fosters a deeper understanding of the parts we all play in perpetuating the systemic dance of racialization. A holistic framework that conveys the interconnection between internal/personal and external/structural components of racial inequity frames the analysis and dialogue in this session.

In order to manifest human rights and dignity for all, it is necessary that we seek union between the head and heart. It is the head that can recognize, analyze and strategize to overcome disparities. It is the heart that obliterates fear. We will use dialogue as a unique tool to create union between the head and heart. It is through this union that we can infuse our actions with our deepest held values, the key to avoiding burn-out and sustaining joy in our work. Joy, rather than fear, in conjunction with systemic framing becomes a radical act towards promoting justice.

Other Topics include:

- **Fear: The Internal Engine of Oppression**
- **Connecting the Head and Heart: An Inner Journey on Behalf of Social Justice and Change**
- **Managing Paradox: *The Way Home***
- **Cracking the Codes: Racism in the 21st Century -- a Film & Dialogue Session**

Films by Shakti Butler



CRACKING THE CODES OF RACIAL INEQUITY: Understanding the System

Cracking the Codes of Racial Inequity is designed to shift the conversation about race in this country and to build the will to create a more equitable society.

The three components of this new film project are: 1) understanding the system of structural racism; 2) consciousness, communication and healing as part of a new vision of building racial equity and 3) effecting change through movement building. The first film in the series, *Understanding the System*, premieres in spring 2012.

Through a critical mass of stories, narrative spoken word, theatre and other art forms, the film links the personal/interpersonal dynamics of racism to their institutional and structural manifestations. The film makes the strategic connections needed for more comprehensive analysis, healing and action while inspiring accountability and a passion for racial justice in many thousands of

students, teachers, nonprofit/faith-based leaders and community members in our country. Like all films developed by Shakti Butler, *Cracking the Codes* will be supported by a post-screening conversation guide designed to structure dialogue that moves viewers from the emotional impact of the film to transformative learning and engagement.

In addition to the film, World Trust is developing, in collaboration with The Applied Research Center, Justice Matters and other experts in the social justice field, a web-based Transformative Learning Program to accompany *Cracking the Codes of Racial Inequity*.

See early footage of *Cracking the Codes* here: <http://world-trust.org/cracking-the-codes-race-relationships-and-healing-in-the-21st-century/>

Praise for *Cracking the Codes of Racial Inequity*

"*Cracking the Codes* asks viewers to understand the costs of systemic racial inequity. Building a world that works for everyone isn't just the right thing to do, it's the only way to fulfill the American Dream.

This unconventional film project challenges us to do just that. "

- **Van Jones**

Co-Founder, Rebuild the Dream

"Most of us, if we admit it, feel pretty stuck and helpless when it comes to addressing racism. It's the social 'third rail' that we either avoid, collide with or both - without much guidance or support. *Cracking the Codes* is an important breakthrough in helping to turn this around. Part story telling, part toolbox, this project deftly portrays the complex interplay between the personal, institutional and systemic.

Cracking the Codes helps us pull the lens back so we can see the landscape of racialization and racial inequity and how we as individuals are shaped by it. It will be an invaluable resource for anyone who has ever wondered how to get this conversation started - and keep it going."

- **Makani Themba-Nixon**

Executive Director, The Praxis Project

"Smart, timely and necessary challenge to the nation to address what race means to all of us."

- **Maya Wiley**

Executive Director, The Center for Social Inclusion



MIRRORS OF PRIVILEGE: MAKING WHITENESS VISIBLE

This film features the experiences of white men and women who have worked to gain insight into what it means to challenge notions of racism and white supremacy. Participants talk about their learned and internalized sense of privilege. Their stories reveal what is often required to move through the stages of denial, defensiveness, guilt, fear, and shame into making a solid commitment to ending racial injustice. This film catalyzes powerful dialogue to support the learning, change and healing of all people who want to undo race-based oppression. 50 min DVD.

Praise for Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible:

"Mirrors of Privilege is a moving call, long-overdue, coming from the heart of white people working to restore their own humanity."

- Van Jones, Co-founder Ella Baker Center for Human Rights & Green for All

"The majority of our faculty and staff are white. It is HUGE that the film features white people exclusively. To have whites hearing other whites telling their stories about how they were raised, how they felt about people of color – it gives them ownership of the issue."

- Gerald Denman, Exec. Director, Office of Diversity Affairs, Puyallup School District, WA

"A seminal work that signals a long awaited, desperately needed paradigm shift in how America, indeed the world, views race and privilege. This film provides us with an innovative tool."

- Joy DeGruy-Leary, PhD, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Social Work, Portland State University, Author of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome

"Shakti Butler has managed to engage white Americans in an honest discussion of race and privilege that has eluded this nation for three centuries. This is a film ALL Americans need to see."

- Shauna Marshall, Academic Dean Hastings College of the Law

"Mirrors of Privilege addresses areas of white privilege, racial wounding and speaks to many of the emergent properties of what we're all dealing with in ways that I've not seen other expressions do."

- Nina Simons, Co-Executive Director, Bioneers

"This film goes beyond a basic awareness of racism to explore the subtle, rarely acknowledged roots of self-hatred and lack of understanding among even the most progressive people."

- Gary Delgado, Former Executive Director, Applied Research Center



THE WAY HOME: Women Talk about Race in America

Over the course of eight months, sixty-four women representing a cross-section of cultures (Indigenous, African-American, Arab, Asian, European-American, Jewish, Latina, and Multiracial) came together to share their experience of racism in America. With uncommon courage, the women speak their hearts and minds about resistance, love, assimilation, standards of beauty, power, school experiences, and more. Their candid conversations offer rare access into multi-dimensional worlds invisible to outsiders.

Given their unique role as community builders and healers in our society, women include their emotional intelligence in describing what it is they experience. This gives women a unique perspective on what it will take to create a more equitable world. This groundbreaking film gives voice to the feminine perspective and allows us to hear how women address the issues that divide us.

92 minutes, DVD

Praise for *The Way Home*:

"Breathtakingly frank, yet loving, conversations." - **SF Weekly**

"The response to our telecast of *The Way Home* was overwhelmingly positive, so much that we aired it twice more. This thought-provoking program is unique in that it shows women of different cultural affinities sharing their lives in a way rarely visualized on television... breaking new ground in ameliorating the history of distrust and misunderstanding amongst the people of this country and the world."

- **Ashley James, Station Manager KTOP/Channel 10, City of Oakland**

"The Way Home was an essential element of ethnic studies curricula while I was an undergrad. It illuminated issues of race and power in the United States in a powerful and unique way. The film was part of what influenced my decision, as a young person, to spend my career working to advance social and racial justice – which I have now been doing for the past 15 years."

-**Vanessa Daniel, Executive Director, Groundswell Fund**

"The Way Home is a fountain of healing truths... living proof that there are no important issues facing humanity that we can afford to tackle without the centrality of women's leadership."

-**Victor Lewis, Cast Member of *The Color of Fear*, Co-chair of the National Organization for Men Against Sexism**



LIGHT IN THE SHADOWS

Light in the Shadows is a frank conversation about race among 10 women who participated in the ground-breaking film *The Way Home*. These American women of Indigenous, African, Arab, European, Jewish, Asian, Latina and Mixed Race descent use authentic dialogue to open a critical door of consciousness.

What lies behind it is a perspective on race that is often unseen/ unnoticed within the dominant culture. With clear language, open hearts and a willingness to engage—even when it gets hard—these women travel over roads that demonstrate why valuable discourse on race is so laden with emotion, distrust and misunderstanding. *Light in the Shadow* is a springboard for critical self-inquiry and inter-ethnic dialogue.

45 minutes, DVD

“Thank you for this film and the discussion guide. I feel like a layer of denial was cracked open and that real progress can now be made.”

- Marcia Lovelace, Librarian, Tehiyah Day School

Shakti Butler, Ph. D.

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

Ph.D. California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA
School of Transformative Learning and Integral Studies (2002)

M.A. Bank Street College of Education, New York City, NY
Guidance and Counseling (1977)

B.S. City College of New York, New York City, NY
Special Education - Magna Cum Laude (1975)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Social Justice Educator and Documentary Film Maker
Executive Director, World Trust Educational Services
Oakland, CA 1994 - current

- Produced and directed three acclaimed social justice documentary films designed for dialogue and transformational learning. The films and their conversation guides are in use in educational institutions, nonprofits, governmental agencies and faith-based groups.
- Seminars, keynote speaking engagements and continual use of the films by institutions nationwide engages nearly 40,000 individuals to racial equity learning each year.
- Have conducted social justice seminars for hundreds of clients including:

UC Berkeley	City of Seattle
Spelman College	Redwood Day School
UC Davis	NAACP/Equal Rights Commission
Northwestern University	Kaiser Permanente
University of North Dakota	YWCA
Stanford University,	US Postal Service
<i>Women's Studies and Student Life</i>	Amnesty International
Duke University	California Teachers Association
UC San Francisco,	Nature Bridge
<i>School of Medicine</i>	The American Red Cross
Temple University,	Evangelical Lutherans of America
<i>Multicultural Institute</i>	Unitarian Universalist Church
- Recent projects include:
 - Co-designed and delivered a certification program that embraces a social justice lens to address educational inequity through art. This was in

partnership with Alameda County Office of Education to support art integration specialists from several California districts frustrated by test score-driven education.

- Through training, social services staff at St. Vincent DePaul Society, whose client population deals with issues of poverty on a daily basis, were able to adopt an analytical frame that was rejuvenating and offered new tools for deep reflection into values, assumptions, communication and policies to result in providing better service.

- Through a workshop offered in partnership with the Applied Research Center, an organization of women philanthropists was inspired to use a racial justice framework as part of their platform for giving.

- YWCA staff leadership teams received training to empower them to devise better educational and policy strategies to support their goal of eliminating racism.

- Supported resident assistants at Michigan Tech University to understanding their own unconscious biases and to be more authentically prepared to welcome and support all students, in particular students of color, who are often in the minority on their campus.

- Supported student leaders at Columbia University and Iowa State to deepen their understanding of the dynamics of racialization through training received via Skype.

FILMS AND PUBLICATIONS

- *Cracking the Codes of Racial Inequity (Film and Learning Program in production)*
- *The New Dream: The 3rd Wave of Environmentalism*, Film for The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, 2009
- *Camp Akili: Where Black is Beautiful*, Film for Leadership Excellence, 2008
- *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible (Film & Conversation Guide)*, 2006
- *In the Company of God: Healing Oppression Through Unconditional Love*, 2002
- *Light in the Shadows (Film & Conversation Guide)*, 2002
- *The Way Home (Film & Conversation Guide)*, 1998
- *The New Entrepreneurs: A Time for Collaboration*