Alfred Rupert Sheldrake is an English author,^[3] lecturer, and researcher in the field of parapsychology,^[4] best known for advocating "morphic resonance", his idea that "memory is inherent in nature".^{[3][5]} He was a biochemist and cell biologist at Cambridge University from 1967 to 1973,^[3] after which he was principal plant physiologist at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics until 1978.^[6] Since then, he has primarily worked on developing and defending morphic resonance, which posits that "natural systems, such as termite colonies, or pigeons, or orchid plants, or insulin molecules, inherit a collective memory from all previous things of their kind".^[5] He also proposes that morphic resonance is responsible for "telepathy-type interconnections between organisms".^[7] As such, his advocacy of the idea encompasses paranormal subjects such as telepathy and "the sense of being stared at"^{[8][9]} as well as unorthodox explanations of normal subjects such as biological development, inheritance, and memory.^[10]

Sheldrake also argues that science has become a world-view bound by a set of dogmas rather than an open-minded method of investigating phenomena,^{[11]:6-12} and advocates questioning such long-standing scientific principles as conservation of energy^{[11]:56} and the impossibility of perpetual motion devices.^{[11]:72-73[12]} He accuses scientists of being susceptible to "the recurrent fantasy of omniscience"^[3] and says "the biggest scientific delusion of all is that science already knows the answers" in principle, leaving only the details to be worked out.^{[11]:6}

Morphic resonance is generally considered to be pseudoscience by the scientific community, with critics citing a lack of evidence supporting the concept and its inconsistency with data from genetics and embryology. Critics also express concern that Sheldrake's books and public appearances attract popular attention in a way that undermines the public's understanding of science.^[a]

Despite the negative reception Sheldrake's ideas have received from the scientific community, they have found support in the New Age movement.^[26] New Age guru Deepak Chopra^[27] sees Sheldrake as a "peacemaker" who "wants to end the breach between science and religion".^[28]