Video Transcript
Armen, IBM Data Scientist, Get insights from an IBM Data Scientist

Hello, my name is Armen Pischdotchian. I am a data scientist at IBM. I, also, happen to be an adjunct professor at the Wentworth Institute of Technology in Massachusetts where I am located. And I've been enjoying this career for twenty years now.

What drew me to AI and eventually to data science was fascination with unstructured data -- texts, images, not just CSV files. And I quickly found out that the crossroads between machine learning and data science was something that I wanted to explore.

I started to realize that this is the right career for me shortly after the jeopardy game at IBM, the Watson product. I was very much engaged with the big data that engulfed that product. And from there on, it was just a matter of time before I was able to put a label around the work that I was doing with Watson, and data science became a natural career thereafter.

I have lots of mentors that help me at IBM. And I think one of the blessings of this corporation is the mentorship that it brings forth. And not just managers and even second-level managers, but my colleagues. By watching them enjoy their work, collaborate with other teams, it became clear to me that the work of data scientists is that of a collaborator. It's a team sport. We work with data analysts, data journalists, data engineers; and those were my mentors along the way that helped me really put together this career and enjoy it.

The best career advice that I received is the one that I would like to, also, pass forward to my audience is an interesting one. My mentors actually made it clear to me that it is more valuable to work in an industry, in a culture that really fosters, embodies your own ways of being and personality... not so much the job because the job can then manifest itself in time as you are well-entrenched into this vertical, into this industry that you actually enjoy being here, as opposed to trying to find that the one job that you love, and it ends up being perhaps in a very small corporation or maybe in a corporation that its products or its direction doesn't quite match with your own sense of belonging. Start with the industry. You will find the role that you want within that soon enough.

How does my job enable me to change the world? I wouldn't necessarily say change the world but certainly impact, influence, and inspire my audience. The way that that comes about isn't necessarily through the practicum of data science but in teaching data science and machine learning to students, to faculty, to workforce development. Really, it is passing on what I have learned on to others that is enabling me to inspire if not change the world.

One of the main tenets of this position is the notion that we are in a team sport. The baton is passed perhaps from the data journalist to the data analyst to the data engineer. I happen to be a subject matter expert in this position, and I really enjoy collaborating with various other entities, divisions, programs right here within IBM, being able to then pass on this knowledge and really foster the notion of teamwork within IBM and my role.

My favorite part of the job is the collaboration that it allows me and one that is dispersed throughout the planet. Time zones, locations are absolutely of no meaning to us. We work with various cultures and people, and various know-hows, and that really makes my job that much more exciting because I've come in contact with people in faraway locations, and we find that we speak the same language when it

comes to data science. In fact, I have come to realize that in this world of all of all of us together, laughter doesn't have an accent.

What would be the perhaps two advices that I might give to someone who's just starting out in the field of data science. One of them is be curious by nature. We are constantly asked the question, "Why?" And that comes up from you having your own hypothesis, having your own pain point, personal one that you want to address. Remain curious throughout this journey. The second one that I would like to emphasize is have a strong statistical background. Often times I, find out that schools K through 12 mostly, they emphasize algebra. I think the greater emphasis perhaps one but you might want to take up is that of statistics. And I think that would help you really well in your journey towards enjoying the field of data science.