What habits or best practices do you wish you had known at the beginning of your data science career?

- Think less about the technical side, focus more on the ***business / product side***. No matter how cool your results are, if they don't deliver answers to business problems/requirements/projects, with No impact on business, the entire efforts are Zero.

- Spending more time on improving and cementing my ***domain understanding and expertise***. This would greatly help me to understand various business use cases, defining, understanding and solving the right problems in data driven ways with respect to the domain and people involved.

- ***Documenting*** the methods, techniques, procedures, processes, writing up results and recording everything. It's quite difficult keeping a good detailed "lab" book.

- Underestimating the ***power of good communication and storytelling with your data.*** You can solve all the world's problems but if you can't properly communicate the solution/value of your work to the business executives and stakeholders, then you've solved nothing at all.

- Deadlines, deadlines, deadlines. If you're working on a project, set deadlines ASAP. Drawing out a **proper plan** out of the business problem/project requirements from the start to finish before the heavy-lifting coding work. Know what you have to do.

- ***Version Control everything***. Create a solid system to version control your analyses. Have the ability to experiment roll back changes, keep a detailed history of changes and comments about why you tried things, display charts, codes and thoughts. This makes your working on multiple projects easier. Github/ Git and Domino Data Lab.

- Be a good citizen of the code base with a focus ***on writing clean, better code, testing, debugging and working with production systems***. Apply the computer science practices around your code: *version control, code reviews, continuous integration, code coverage and deployment.* Machine Learning Operations (MLOps).
- **Reading a lot**. Spend ample time reading up different ways, methods, case studies, research papers/existing projects, textbooks and blogs related to the projects/tasks I am working on, to understand how similar projects operate, function, solved and are utilized.

- ***Asking questions as possible*** from those more experienced/ knowledgeable than you without being too annoying and talk to everyone in the company. Get involved, be curious and let others know about your thoughts. The more feedback you get on your thoughts, the better you can fine-tune your work on the business context. Don't be shy and just sit in front of your data. Constantly ask yourself, **why** you are doing what you are doing, ask till you understand the matter.

- ***Always interact with the business teams*** to understand accurately the business context, question, project needs. Clarify the expectations by asking good questions. Understand why you are running analysis, what business questions you are trying to answer Generating and capturing value is the essence of concrete business.

- Learnt to live by the **80/20 rule**. Work fast as speed is more important to business than in academia.

- Learn to say **No**. this is a great thing I am still learning.