



HI TECH PERSON, MY NAME IS

**PARVEEN  
DOWNER**

I am a **career coach** that helps tech folk get unstuck in their career, get promoted, or get out — with clarity, confidence, and no corporate buzzword salad

## So, you've done the hard work but no one is listening....

You've pulled the data. Cleaned it. Checked it. Double-checked it. Maybe even made a chart fancy enough to impress your nan. And then... a stakeholder drops the dreaded lines:

- "Are you sure?"
- "This should be simple."
- "Just give me the number."
- "The data looks broken."

Sound familiar? Welcome to the part of analytics no SQL query can fix: getting people to listen.

This resource is your quick-fire toolkit for those moments. No overthinking, no endless Slack threads, no secretly crying into your pivot table. Just practical, confidence-boosting responses you can lean on when you're put on the spot.

Huge thanks to the brilliant crowd at MeasureCamp London 2025 for co-creating and pressure-testing these lines during my session "When data tells a story but no one is listening." This resource wouldn't exist without your sharp brains and honest stories.

## How to use this

1. Print it, pin it, or keep it on your desktop. The next time someone dismisses your work, flip to the relevant section.
2. Try one line at a time. The goal isn't to sound like a robot reading a script — it's to give yourself a jumping-off point so you don't freeze.
3. Adapt with confidence. These phrases work because they buy you space, reset the power dynamic, and remind people you're more than "just the data person."
4. Confidence doesn't always mean having the perfect answer on the spot. It means being able to hold your ground, redirect the conversation, and remind people that data — and you — deserve to be heard.

⚠ Quick Disclaimer: Think of this as a menu, not a script. You know your stakeholders best: their quirks, their temperament, their best modes of communication. Use the phrases that fit, adapt the tone to your context, and trust your judgment. (Only you can know what lands — not me!)

# The Analyst's Cheat Sheet: What to Say When No One's Listening

## 1. "Are you sure?"

🗣️ What they mean: I don't like this answer. Please tell me something different.

💡 Your move: "Yes, and here's how I got to this conclusion." **OR** "What part of this feels off to you? Let's dig into that together."

## 2. "This seems broken, the data doesn't look right."

🗣️ What they mean: I don't trust what I'm seeing.

💡 Your move: "Let's walk through the assumptions behind this — sometimes the surprise is the insight." **OR** "Happy to validate this further — which dataset or business context do you want me to compare it against?"

## 3. "Can you just... [insert not-so-simple thing]"

🗣️ What they mean: I don't know how long this really takes and I just need it done.

💡 Your move: "Great idea — here's the effort estimate. Which priority would you like me to drop to make space?" **OR** "I'll add it to the backlog. Want me to keep you posted when it rises to the top?"

## 4. "This should be simple..."

🗣️ What they mean: I don't know what's involved yet, but I assume it's straightforward.

💡 Your move: "Some parts are simple, yes — let's walk through what makes this request quick and what adds complexity." **OR** "It looks simple on the surface — here is why I think this request may not be that simple."

## 5. "There's too much data, where do I even start?"

🗣️ What they mean: I'm overwhelmed. Help me focus.

💡 Your move: "What decision are you trying to make? That'll tell us which slice of data matters most." **OR** "Let's start small: one metric, one trend, one next step."

## 6. Stakeholders don't know how to give requirements

🗣️ What they mean: I want something but I can't articulate it.

💡 Your move: "Tell me what success looks like — if this analysis was perfect, what decision would it help you make?" **OR** "What's the impact if we don't do this?"

## 7. "That's a good insight, but no..." (aka: "My idea is better / I'll go with my gut / Competitors are doing X.")

🗣️ What they mean: I heard you, but I don't want to act on it.

💡 Your move: "To help us make a good decision, let's test both — what small experiment would help us decide?" **OR** "Gut feel is important. Want me to show you what the data says if we follow that path?"

## 8. "Just give me the number."

🗣️ What they mean: Spare me the nuance.

💡 Your move: "I can give you the number — but here's what it does and doesn't mean." **OR** "Sure. Do you want the number as of today, or the rolling trend over the last X weeks?"

## 9. "The timing doesn't seem right."

🗣️ What they mean: I'm not sure this analysis lines up with when the problem actually happened.

💡 Your move: "Interesting — which timing are you expecting? Let's compare that with what the data shows." **OR** "That's useful feedback. Let's double-check the timeframe and see if adjusting the window changes the picture."

## 10. "I'm not sure about the data quality."

🗣️ What they mean: I don't trust the source.

💡 Your move: "Fair point — here's the QA process we ran." **OR** "Which part are you most concerned about? We can validate that first."

## You've got this.

Now that you've got a pocket full of ready-made responses, the real test is trying them out in the wild. Next time someone hits you with "just give me the number" — try a line from this sheet and see how the room shifts. By giving yourself some space to think (instead of taking their comments at face value), these responses help you build rapport through curiosity. And who knows, maybe it might even make your analysis and storytelling stronger.

👉 I'd love to hear how it goes:

- Did a phrase buy you breathing space?
- Did a stakeholder actually back down?
- Got another good line you think belongs here?

Drop me a note — I'm always collecting real-world stories and adding to this toolkit.

Want to take this further? This cheat sheet is just the starting point. If you're looking to build lasting, evidence-based confidence (not just for stakeholder wrangling, but across your career), you've got two options:

The Quietly Confident Club → a 3 month group coaching sprint where you'll practice this stuff in real time with peers.

Private coaching → personalised support to get clarity, build confidence, and finally feel heard. (Start with a free clarity call.)



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