

# I SUCK

With my beginner's knowledge of psychology, as well as the aid of Wikipedia, I have ascertained that I suffer from what I believe to be a mild inferiority complex. In other words, I believe that I suck all the time, everyday. I'm constantly comparing myself to others and, more often than not, finding myself falling short. In addition to this, I worry about menial things like the loudness of my heels disrupting classes as I walk down the hall or accidentally revealing my supreme dorkiness. I'm afraid that people will hear me listening to "Singin' in the Rain" on my iPod and scoff at my taste in music. By now, you're probably thinking that this is a terrible way to live, and you're absolutely right. My struggles with feelings of inferiority have been something I've battled my whole life. And though I'm not exactly Sigmund Freud, I'm guessing that dating a man who is good at everything probably isn't helping my situation.

My boyfriend Ryan is freaking amazing, and it's a problem. I've never in my life seen a person so talented at *everything*. He is King Midas. Everything he touches turns to gold. From ice skating to typing, there is nothing he can't do.

Although I know that he is obscenely talented, for some reason, I can't help but challenge him to competitions. I think a part of me looks to these competitions for validation, but of course, they never end well. In the course of our relationship he has successfully beaten me at:

- Tetris
- Pinball
- Padiddle
- Running
- Ping Pong
- Air hockey
- Rock climbing
- Any game on Xbox
- Numerous tickle fights
- Anything involving knowledge of math or science
- A contest to see who could catch the most food with their mouth
- Every debate we have ever had (except for one, which we have deemed a stalemate)

I, on the other hand have won:

- One game of hot potato (which may or may not have been a legitimate victory, as I suspect he let me win)

He's smarter than me. He's better with animals. He's better at getting to places on time. He's better at driving. The list goes on and on. My mental scoreboard has always placed Ryan at 1,743,098 and me at 0. All this came to a

head two years ago when we went away for the weekend to the Kancamangus Mountains in New Hampshire.

On Easter Sunday we decided to go skiing. Now, it had been a good eleven years since I had skied. However, I figured it would come back to me. (Now, here is where most people would add “it’d be like riding a bicycle,” but alas, I can’t do that either. And yes, Ryan is an excellent biker.) After putting on my skis, Ryan and I rode the lift with his father and little brother to the summit. After snapping some photos of the beautiful view, it was time to descend the mountain.

Full of optimism, I pushed off with my ski poles and began sliding down the slope. I remember feeling the wind on my face and inhaling the scent of pine, and for a moment I was completely serene. But as I picked up speed, I couldn’t help but think, “One bad move and I’m tumbling down the mountain.”

Suddenly, the image of my lifeless body lying beneath the boughs of the pine trees popped into my head. Now terrified of going near the edge of the trail, I stayed in the middle. This, of course, is a terrible idea for a beginning skier. You should try to zigzag down the trail, otherwise you whoosh straight down the trail at a speed to which your 5’1” body is not at all accustomed to, and you end

up lying in the snow contorted into the shape of a pretzel, waiting for your boyfriend to help you disentangle yourself and get back on your skis.

Now, in my defense, I had several things going against me. First of all, it was the end of April, and the snow was the consistency of mashed potatoes. “This kind of snow is very difficult to ski,” Ryan’s father explained, as he plucked my left ski from five feet behind me and helped put it back on my foot. As if this was not embarrassing enough, Ryan’s nine-year-old brother Sean swished past me while Ryan followed gracefully behind. Then there was the fact that we were skiing a trail 2.75 miles long. This seemed like a great idea initially, but I later realized that the longer the trail just meant more chances to end up on my back.

We were nearing the end when I fell once more. Ryan stopped and waited for me to get up. I tried to get up, but my muscles were so exhausted from lifting myself up so many times, I fell back onto the snow. “Come on,” he said, a little impatiently. I felt a lump form in my throat. My muscles ached. My entire back was completely soaked from the wet snow. All I wanted to do was finish the damn trail and sit down. I tried again, and almost succeeded, but my skis

slipped out from under me at the last second. This time I just lay there, looking more like a starfish than a skier.

“Come on, you can do it,” Ryan said. Suddenly, I found myself furious with him. Here I was on the ground, while he was standing perfectly poised on his skis. I could feel the tears about to start.

“What’s wrong?” asked Ryan.

“It’s not fair,” I whined. I swallowed, fighting back the tears. “You’re good at everything.”

“What? No I’m not.”

“Everything is so easy for you. And I I can’t do anything.”

“What?” he said again, as if the idea were completely absurd. He grabbed my hand and pulled me up. “Erin, there are lots of things you’re good at.”

I sniffled and slowly shuffled my skis to move myself forward.

Ryan looked me in the eyes and said, “You’re a great writer. And you’re a good cook.” He smirked and said, “You’re a great girlfriend.”

I smiled back.

“You don’t have to be good at everything. Besides, I’ve been skiing since I was little. This is only your second time skiing.”

Though this is hardly a revelation for most people, it hit me suddenly like a bolt of lightning. I didn't have to be good at everything? Why had this not occurred to me before? All of a sudden, my little meltdown seemed so silly. Ryan gave me a kiss on the cheek. He showed me how to weave back and forth so I wasn't barreling straight down the mountain. I followed his lead, and soon I was catching on. When we got to the bottom of the trail he asked, "You want to go again?" I said yes.