

real girl

VS.

real world

Raising self-confident daughters
despite society's mixed messages

BY AMY HENRY

"I SUCK AT VIOLIN," my 14-year-old daughter says as we drive home from a summer music workshop.

"How can you say that?" I snap. I'm startled and dismayed—her trashing of herself has become all too familiar. "You were concertmistress of the school orchestra last year!"

She rolls her eyes but grudgingly ups her self-assessment. "OK. I'm average."

We continue to debate her ability, our tempers mounting, until I break down and confess. "I hate it when you sell yourself short. Women are always doing that, and their lives end up so much less for it."

As we drive on in silence, I wonder how it is that, in an era of female opportunity and empowerment, my bright, capable daughter feels she cannot claim her due.

TABITHA SOREN

