In 2007, I told 60 Minutes that millennials, the generation of young people coming of age in the 21st century, could be incorrigible. “You do have to speak to them a little bit like a therapist on television might speak to a patient,” I said to Morley Safer. “You can’t really ask them to live and breathe the company, because they’re living and breathing themselves—and that keeps them very busy.”

Boy, what a difference three years makes. I’ve never been as optimistic as I am now about the power of young minds. People under 30 changed the way we communicate, founding companies such as Google and Facebook. They helped propel Barack Obama into the presidency, thereby starting to restore America’s stature in the world. And they traded the Me Generation materialism of their parents for a genuine passion for good, forcing businesses of all stripes to clean up their act and pay up on their promises of social responsibility.

I’ve studied youth culture for 20 years, and I have no doubt that today’s teens and twentysomethings live in a world infinitely more complicated than anything the John Hughes Generation could imagine. Yet they’re more than rising to the occasion. This is a group of advocates, not of narcissists; of leaders, not of followers.

That power of young minds will be amplified on February 8, when several hundred of the best and brightest from all 192 countries on Earth will gather in London for the inaugural One Young World summit. Founded by Havas’ (our parent company) global CEO David Jones and Euro RSCG UK group chairman Kate Robertson, this is a Davos for the under-25 set, designed to bring a fresh take on the world’s most challenging issues and inspire hope and change.

The delegates will debate and vote on draft resolutions regarding such topics as interfaith dialogue, the environment, global health, and the changing media. They will be guided and addressed by some of the world’s most extraordinary leaders, including Kofi Annan and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

On the One Young World Web site, tomorrow’s leaders are weighing in.

“I think it should be the power of ideas, not money, which gets voted for in elections.”

“We are the driving force of any nation...don’t we realize how much power we have on our hands...?”

Not all millennials, it turns out, are the sort of millennials I was so worried about. I’m eating crow now, but I’m still a stereotyper (as all trendspotters are at times), so I have a new one. The leaders of this generation, whether they’re American, British, or Chinese, are the un-millennials: actively engaged with the world around them, fully aware of how global issues affect their local communities, passionate about their own power to effect change, and guided by idealistic values.

They’re also the leaders of tomorrow, with the tools to take themselves and the rest of us from passive observers to active participants. We should all be paying attention so we can start preparing ourselves for our new future now.