

A black and white photograph of a person from behind, looking out a window. The person is wearing a dark jacket and has their hands in their pockets. The window has a handle and a latch. The background outside the window is blurry, showing some foliage.

Risk, Realism and Ritalin

A study of the Post-Millennial Generation

M&CSAATCHI

the source

**M&C Saatchi commissioned
their market research agency
The Source to carry out a global
qualitative/quantitative study,
exploring the views, attitudes
and behaviours of the so-called
Post-Millennial Generation.**

And what we found was a generation of
pessimistic middle-aged teenagers who are:

**ill-informed and anxious
incredibly risk-adverse
unwilling to dream big**

Who are the 'Post-Millennial' Generation?

A definition...

- Born from the late-1990s to the early 2000s (under 20s)
- Digital natives
(Internet existed all their lives)
- Grew up in the aftermath of 9/11
- never known a time before the War on Terror
- Lived through effects of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s



**But who are
they really?**

We're all a product of our environment.
Post-Millennials are no different.

**3 factors have shaped
this generation:**

All-Pervasive Social Media

Geo-Political Upheaval

Global Recession

A photograph of a group of young people, likely students, sitting in a row and looking down at their smartphones. The image is heavily overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The person in the foreground is a young man wearing a plaid baseball cap and a dark hoodie, focused on his phone. Behind him, other students are visible, also looking at their devices. The overall mood is one of constant connectivity and digital engagement.

All-Pervasive Social Media

True Digital Natives

They have grown up with social media and can't remember a time when smartphones didn't exist.

The world is at their fingertips.
But that has ramifications.



Their personal brand matters

The most vain generation yet?

What you look like matters more than ever before.

Where sport used to be about play, about fun, teenage boys now hit the gym alone to build the bodies that look good online.



Teenage boys are joining their first gym as early as **13 years old**²

One US study of 14-year olds found that 35% of boys & 21% of girls **used protein powders**³

Just doing ok is no longer ok

If I'm out, I'll post it on Instagram.
If people don't see that I'm there,
it basically didn't happen!

1. It's no longer ok to be seen to be wasting the weekend in bed as teenagers 'traditionally' have done. They need to be seen to be **'active'**; out there, **having amazing experiences.**
2. Drunken antics long associated with the young might still happen but they rarely exist (online at least) for long.
3. Accompanying this is the ever-present 'perfect celebrity' reminding you that it matters how you look and how you live **(and also bringing into sharp focus your own humdrum existence).**



More friends, but fewer physical relationships?



The likes of Snapchat and Whatsapp allow them to chat on demand to many friends at once, so they feel they're being more sociable than ever...

I can see what my friends are up to online - it's just easier to speak to them all at once on Whatsapp

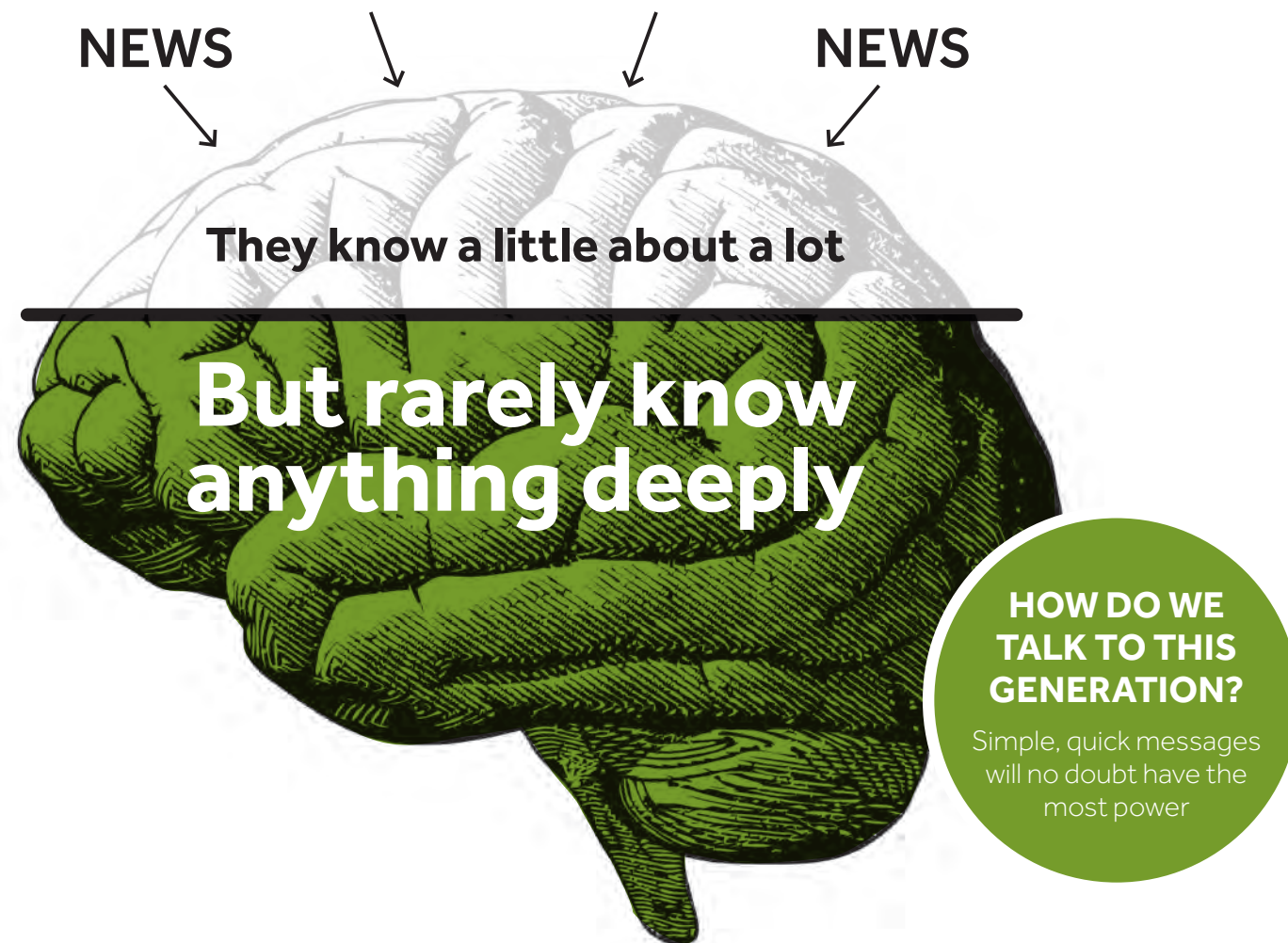
...but they don't need to physically meet up,

Kids just aren't hanging out like they used to

Why see one friend when you can speak to 20 from the comfort of your home?

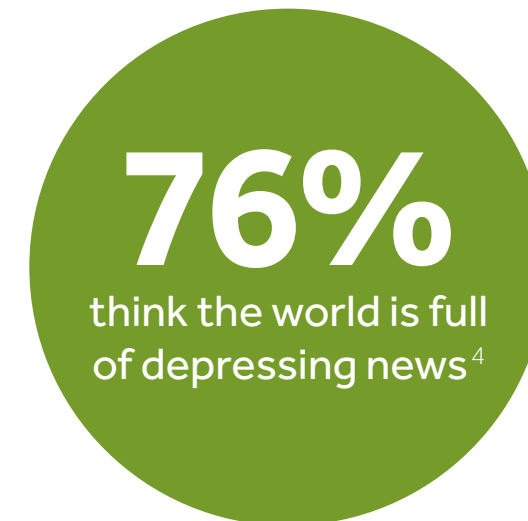
'News aware', but not necessarily well-informed

News on social media is an inescapable, constant presence. But it's skim-read, leading to superficial understanding.



And because the tone of so much news online is hyperbolic, **it can seem more significant and worrying** (teens by virtue of their youth **lack the perspective** that comes with age).

Post-Millennials are aware of the issue of Fake News but struggle to differentiate between what's true and what's fake. Being unable to critically analyse the media means sound decision-making is hindered.

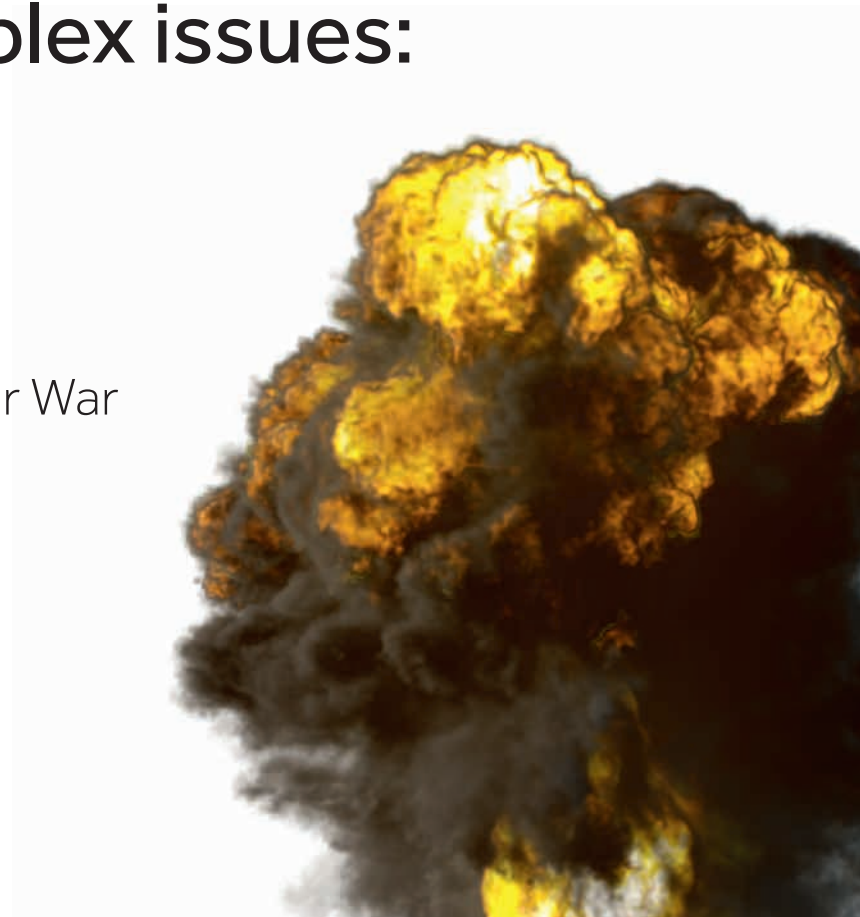




Geo-Political Upheaval

This is a generation that has grown up seeing and hearing about big complex issues:

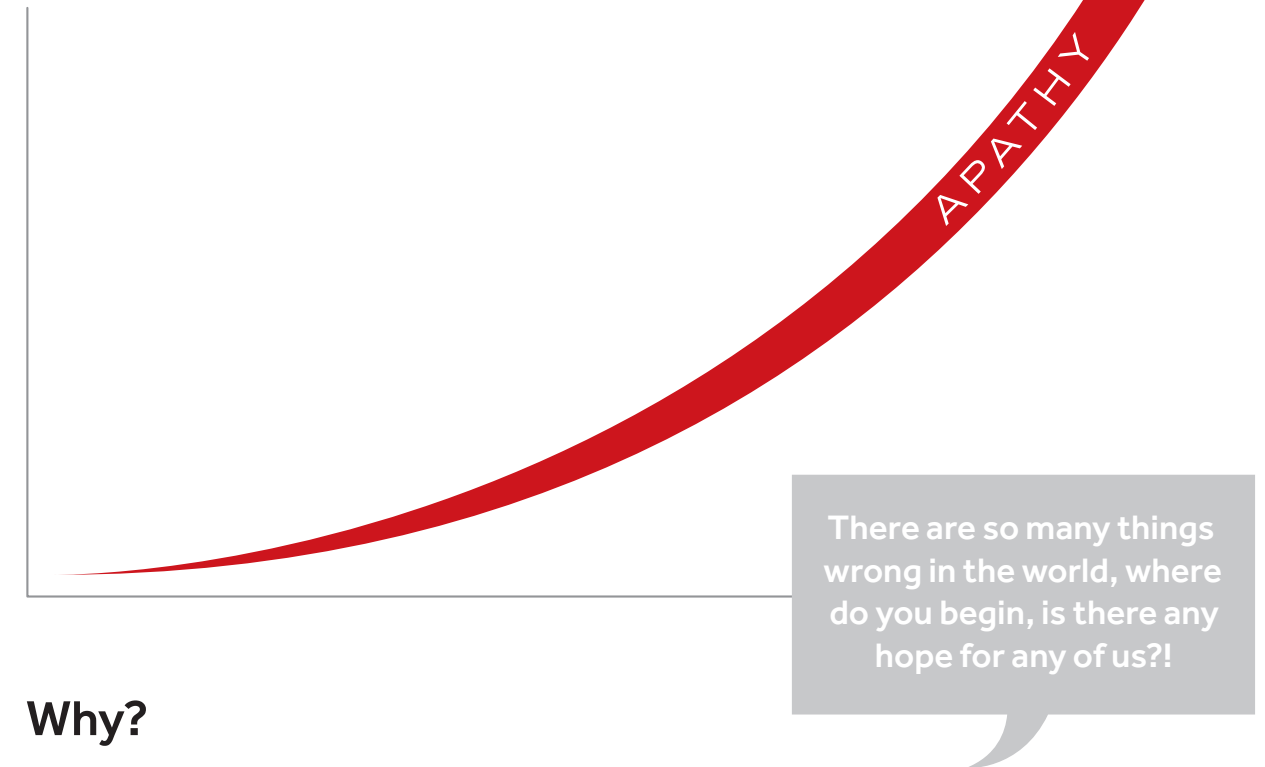
- Terrorism
- Climate Change
- Recent threat of Nuclear War



In fact, they are arguably the most politically-aware generation of all time

The pervasiveness of 'news' means that where teenagers in the past could easily ignore politics (politics was the 'stuff' of their parents), today politics can't be ignored.

But despite this, political apathy is on the rise



Why?

- They're overwhelmed. It all feels too big for them.
 - There are no strong ideas or ideologies for them to rebel against or coalesce behind as one unified generation of teenagers.
- Compare this to previous generations that always had something they felt they wanted to fight for. **It united them. It energised them.**

Why does this matter?

An apathetic, unknowledgeable voter with a superficial understanding of events and politics may react in ways we don't expect...

This doesn't mean to say they don't care

They do. They're passionate. They're stubborn even.

But because there is no coherent ideology or set of beliefs to fight for together, they often end up focusing on singular issues.

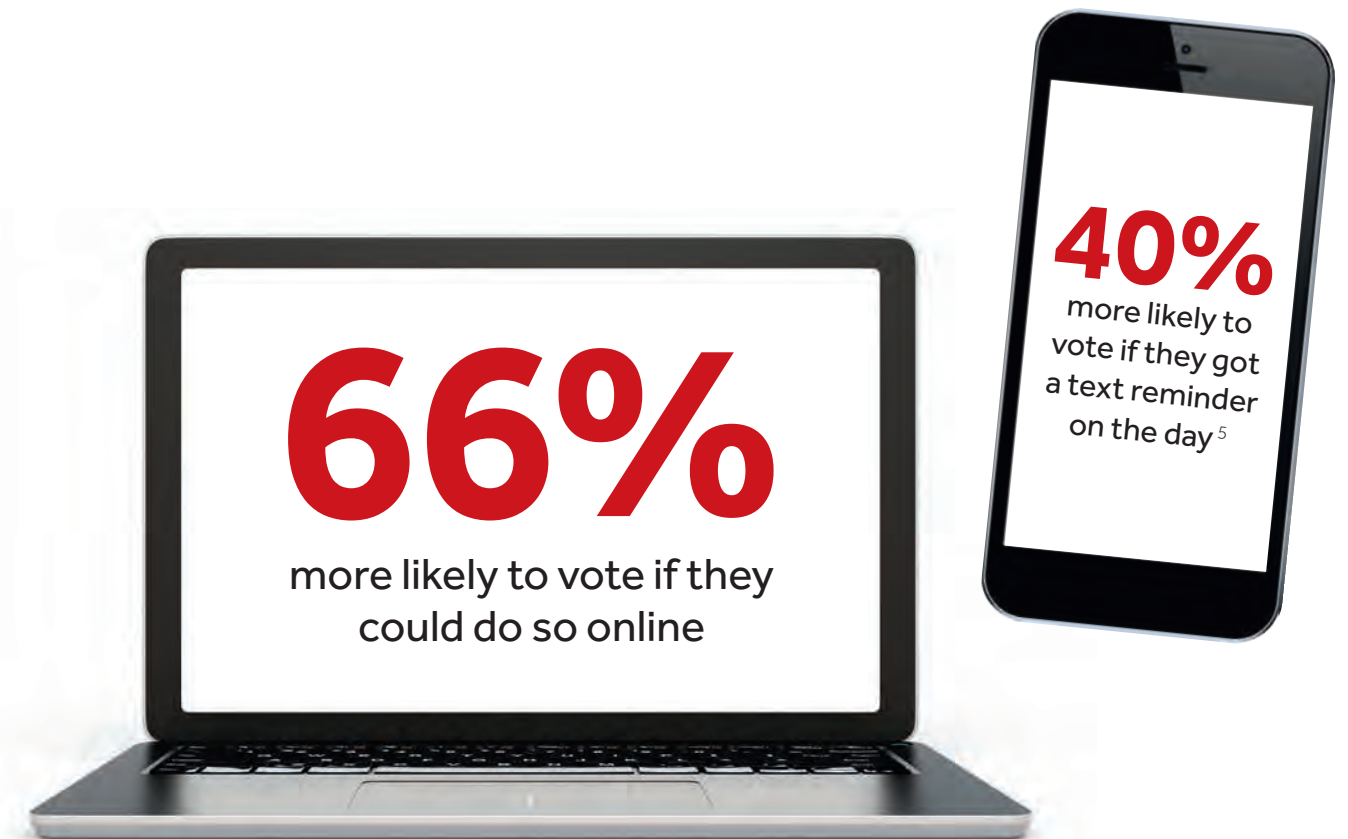


This generation see equality as the norm. Societal shifts have redefined how they view gender/race etc. Discrimination simply makes no sense to them.

BIG, simple ideas

can cut through the rising apathy

Reach out to the young via methods and mediums that relate to the way they live.



The Global Recession



Living in the aftermath of the Global Recession...

...the future feels bleak

They are acutely aware of:

- Fewer good jobs to go around (and therefore less chance of a good, stable career similar to their parents)
- Rising house prices out of line with wages
- Rising pension ages and diminishing pension options
- Increased immigration

I can't see how I'll ever be able to afford a house. Or even just a flat at this rate! I don't want to live at home forever!



These are things teenagers never used to give any thought to.

They no longer trust the traditional
'safe' pathways to success



The consequences of this
are only just being seen:

1

More competitive

2

Dreaming small

3

Losing the joy of learning

1

More competitive

Doing well at school no longer
feels enough.

You need to be top of the class.

A true high achiever.

70%

think they will have to
work a lot harder than
their parents to achieve
the same as them⁴

More US teens
than ever before are
taking **Ritalin**, in the
belief it can boost
school performance⁶



2

Dreaming small

Half of the generation think they will realistically only have one holiday a year⁴

Faced with the harsh realities of life, why bother dreaming big when it's most likely not going to happen?

What do I want from the future?
A small house. A solid job.
I'll never have a house by the lake in Hamburg or own a Porsche or Ferrari



3

Losing the joy of learning

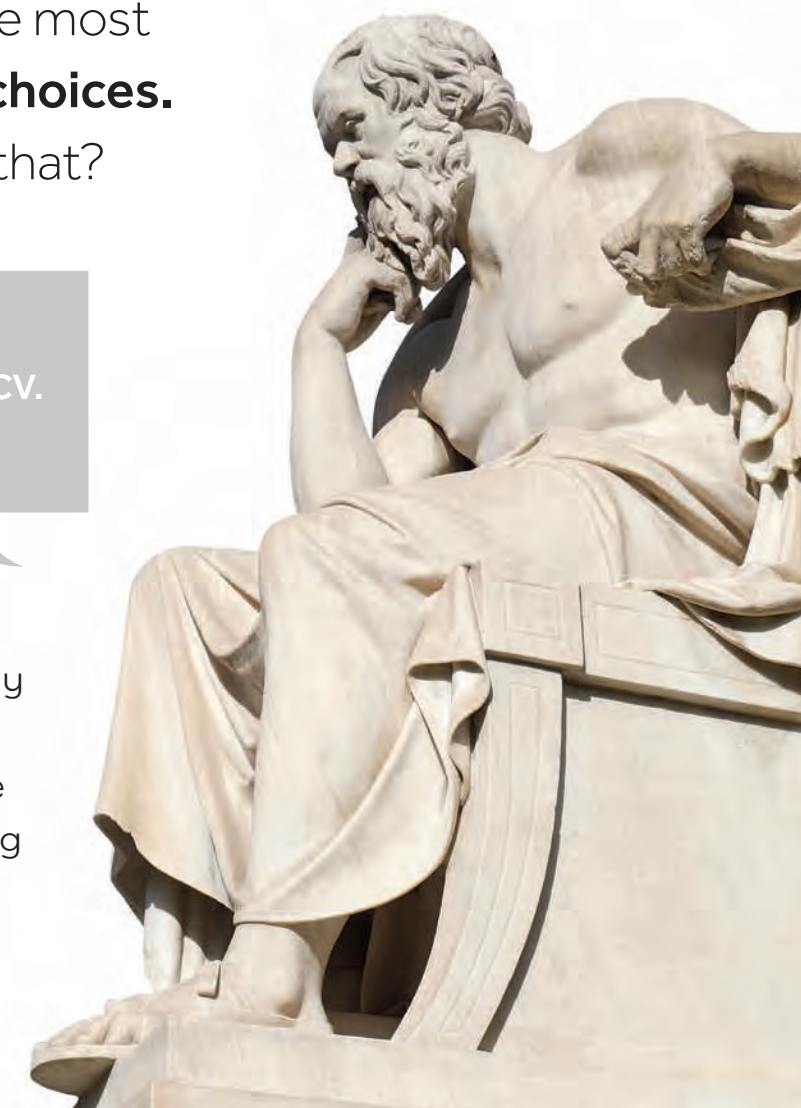
71%

agree it's important to
get a steady, secure job
as soon as they can⁴

Feeling that every
decision or action has a
consequence for their future,
Post-Millennials make the most
pragmatic and sensible choices.
But where's the fun in that?

You'd never do a job that
doesn't look good on your CV.
What's the point?

Subjects such as
History of Art, Philosophy
or Ancient History are
rejected as few can see
their relevance to winning
in the modern world.



We have produced a generation of middle-aged teenagers

It's safety first.

Risks are assessed and managed.

Spontaneity, frivolity and making mistakes (the lifeblood of the young to date) has been replaced by a generation of serious-minded strivers, anxious about a challenging future.



Do we really want our teenagers...

Dreaming

SMALL?

A photograph of a person with blonde hair lying on their side on a bed. They are wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. A laptop is open on the bed next to them, and there are some books or papers nearby. The bed has a patterned blanket. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "Where does this leave us?" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

**Where does
this leave us?**

Where the so-called 'Millennials' are often thought about as suffering from a **'lost innocence'**, in that they were promised so much only to see it snatched away by global recession, rising costs, fewer jobs etc...

...Post-Millennials can be seen as **'Never Innocent'**:

- Hyper-aware but often ill-informed leading to increased anxiety.
- Future focused, concerned about the repercussions of their actions, leading to a safety first, no risk approach to life.
- Unwillingness to dream big. Realistic and pragmatic. "It's unlikely" rather than "nothing is impossible".

We need to put the dreams back into Post-Millennials.

To make it feel ok to daydream.

To give them back their innocence.

To tell them that failure is ok.

It will happen. You're not supposed
to know what you're going to be at 16.

That the world is not fucked.

To worry less and enjoy more.

As this generation grows up, businesses will need to respond

1 New individualism

Post-Millennials are looking to compete and win by making their world small, managing risk and maximising control. We may be at a dawn of new selfishness (and that's before the stabilisers of high employment and low interest rates are removed).

2 Re-born entrepreneurialism

The new entrepreneurialism will be less like the Millennial's 'I can change the world' and more 'I can change my world.'

3 The end of purpose

High minded moral crusading is replaced by down-to-earth pragmatism.

Post-Millennials will be cynical of 'purpose' and will demand brands, companies and institutions to be straightforward, to the point and realistic. "Tell me what you are good at and why, and if you must have a purpose keep it close to home."

Sources:

1. Pew Research Center (Internet, Science & Tech), 'Teens, Social Media & Technology Overview 2015'
2. The Daily Telegraph, 'Why we shouldn't be encouraging teenage boys to go to the gym' (September 2015)
3. Eisenberg ME et al 'Muscle-enhancing behaviours among adolescent girls and boys' (Pediatr 2012; 130:1019-1026)
4. The Source, Post-Millennial Survey (commissioned by M&C Saatchi) (2017)
5. Demos, 'Tune in, Tune out' (2012)
6. The Partnership at Drhgfrees.org Report, 'More teens abusing Adderall and Ritalin' (2013)

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