Axel Hacke
On Decency in trying times and the question of how we can all get along

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These are turbulent times, and tumultuous events can rock the very foundations of how we live. Time, then, to ask ourselves what it means for each of us if lies, self-interest and gross conduct hold sway and even gain power. What happens when fundamental rules of propriety are flaunted with such success in public life. In these circumstances, what does it mean to live a decent life? Axel Hacke's book is no polemic – there are enough pamphleteers at work in the world – but an associative reflection on what it means for human beings to live together. He is motivated by the same questions which preoccupied Anton Chekhov: how to "live as best we can." It is a plea that we look for the answers, not in others, but initially in ourselves and that in doing so we discover some humility and perhaps even curiosity about other people. In our complicated world, we are unlikely to find a simple solution to all our problems, and anyone claiming this should be treated with mistrust. But we can face this fact with decency and give due thought to the big, recurring question: how do we want to live together?

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