Making ethical decisions presumably requires knowledge about ethics. If so, then one reason that people might make unethical decisions is that they have limited understanding of ethical principles. The relationships between the understanding of an ethical principle, moral awareness and ethical decision were tested across two experimental studies. We show that deepening people’s understanding of an ethical principle, a conflict of interest principle, enables them to become more morally aware and make more ethical decisions. Study 1 showed guiding people through analogical encoding processes with maximal comparison training deepened their understanding of the ethical principle. The study also showed that, as a result, drawing analogies increased the levels of moral awareness for a new situation in which the principle was at stake. Finally, the study found that drawing analogies also promoted making an ethical decision. Study 2 further tested whether subtle comparison of two analogous examples of the ethical principle improves people’s understanding of that principle, moral awareness and ethical decision-making, and found that it did. Thus, the two studies support the possibility that one reason people make poor ethical choices might be that they have limited understanding of ethical principles, which decreases moral awareness.