Most accountants do not realize—until it is perhaps too late—that virtually all aspects of their work have an ethical dimension. They often lack the knowledge and skills to analyse issues effectively, and when confronted with conflicting ethical problems cannot choose the way to move forward that is consistent with their own values and/or the profession’s code of professional conduct. This article proposes that the accounting profession worldwide has simply attempted to prescribe simplistic solutions to often complex ethical problems. It endeavours to provide an alternative approach based on the process of ‘ethical knowing’ (Melchin, 1998). Such an approach turns the acquisition of understanding away from a focus on the external world of rules, concepts and exemplars, to the interior world of how accountants, as people, arrive at an understanding that is consistently ethical. To achieve this, the article relies on Lonergan’s seminal (1957) examination of the internal processes of decision-making and the critical roles played by developing skills in data retrieval and insight in the exercise of judgment.