Vibepod

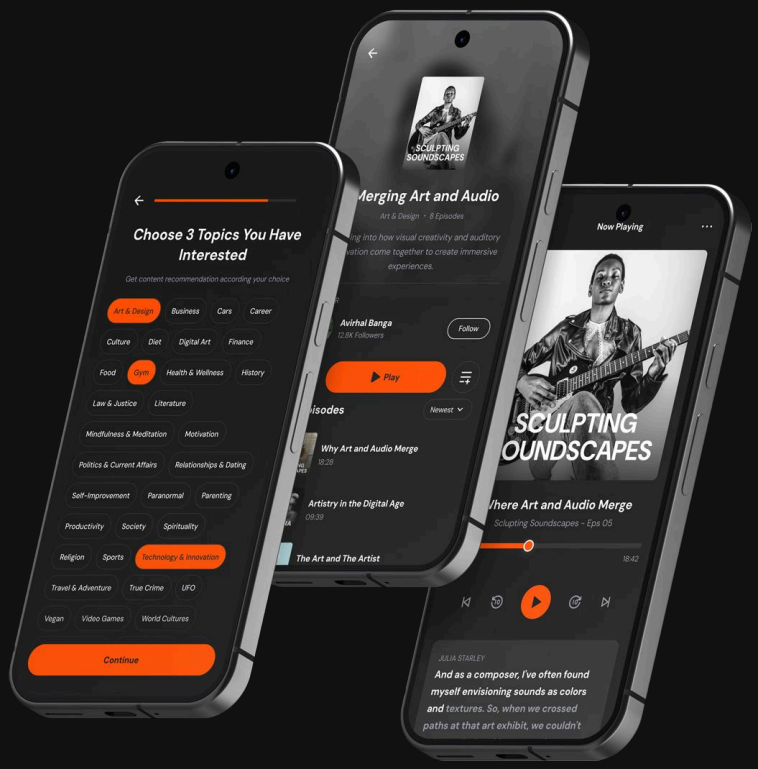
Project Overview

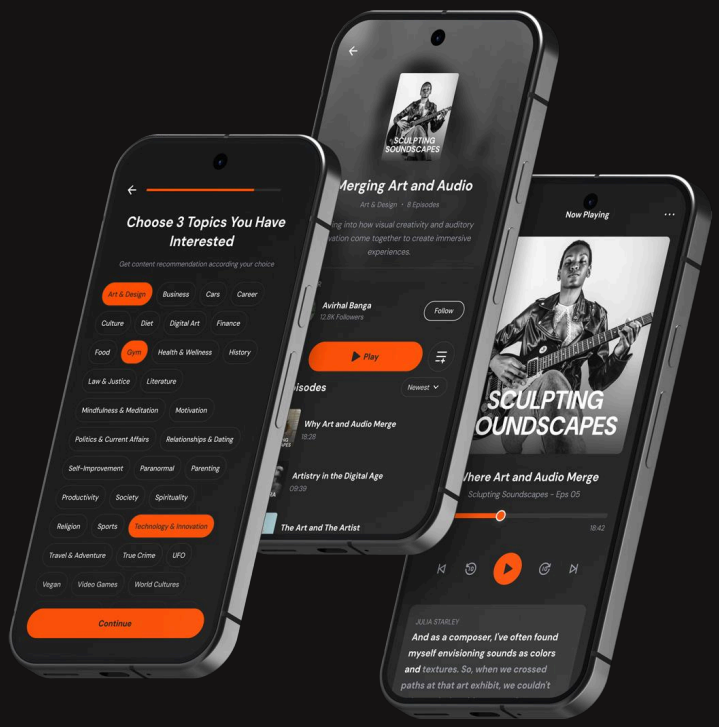
VibePod is a mood-aware podcast app that matches content to how you feel — not just what you've listened to before.

Designed for people who want their podcast experience to adapt to their day, VibePod moves beyond static recommendations to deliver the right content at the right emotional moment.

Role

UX/UI Designer





Problem Statement

> Podcast listeners don't consume content in a vacuum — but every major platform treats them like they do.

Existing apps like Spotify Music Pocket Casts recommend content based on listening history and topic tags. They ignore mood, time of day, and situational context entirely.

A user winding down at 10pm doesn't want the same suggestions as when they're powering through a Monday morning commute.

The core gap

No platform was connecting *how users feel to what they should hear.*

User Research

What listeners actually need — and what platforms ignore.
The data behind the design decisions.

51% *Showing content needs to vary drastically by time of day.*

Of podcast listeners consume while relaxing ***before sleep.***

Edison Research, 2019 (via Harrison et al., Frontiers in Psychology, 2023)

47% *(approx).* *A single platform is not meeting all the user needs.*

Of listeners use ***more than one*** podcast app per month.

NewMedia.com Podcast Statistics, 2026

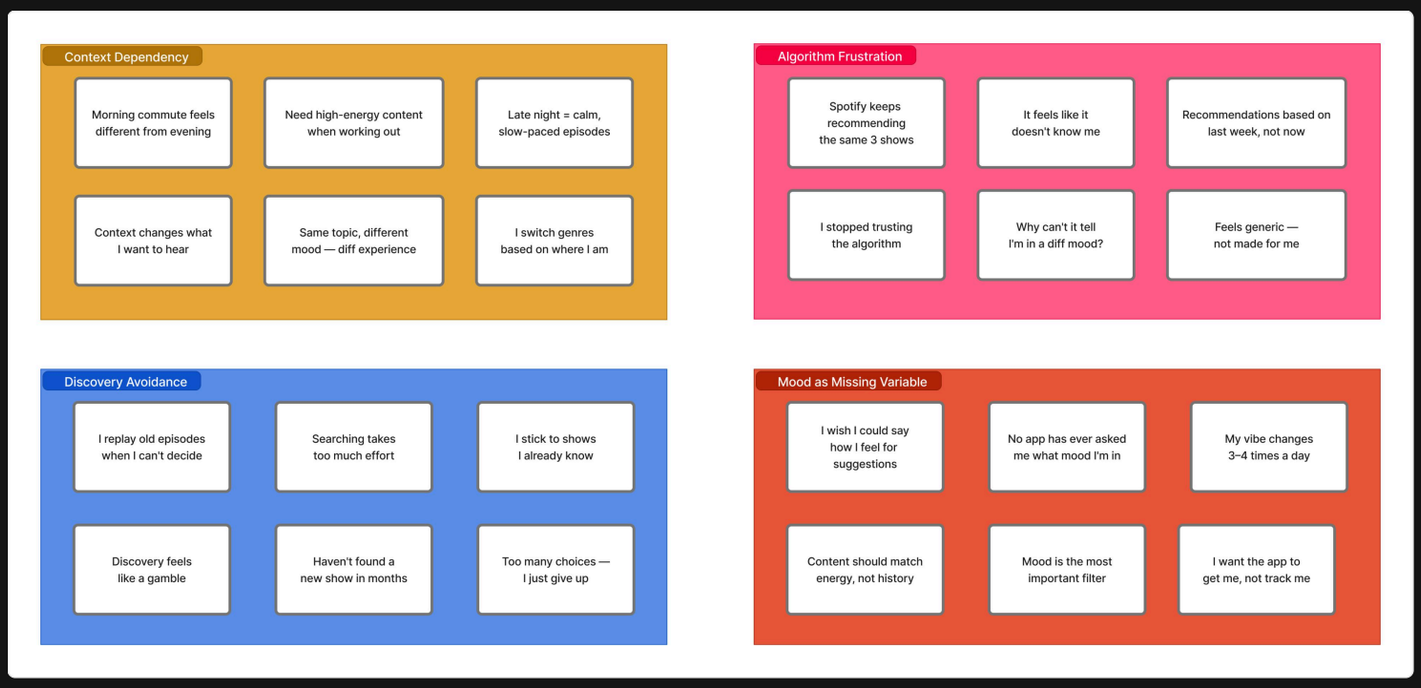
42% *(approx).* *Recommendation quality is highly critical for podcasts.*

New podcast discoveries come from platform algorithms/search.

NewMedia.com Podcast Statistics, 2026

Affinity Diagram

What listeners actually need — and what platforms ignore.
The data behind the design decisions.



User Personas

About

Avirhal has no fixed schedule. His day flows between deep work, breaks, and late-night sessions. He listens to podcasts constantly but in very different ways depending on what he's doing.

When he's designing, he wants background noise with substance. When he's burnt out, he wants something that pulls him in emotionally. He's open to discovering new shows but ***finds the effort of searching exhausting.***

Goals

Find content that matches his current energy without searching.

Discover new shows in niches like Art & Design and Mindfulness.

Keep up with live creative conversations and events.

Frustrations:

Recommendations feel generic and repetitive.

Hard to switch contexts between focused work and casual listening.

No way to signal "I want something calm right now".

About

Sofia's day is rigidly structured. Up at 6am, prep, teach, gym, cook, sleep. Podcasts fit into very specific slots: educational content during her morning routine, light comedy or storytelling during her commute home, and absolutely nothing stimulating after 9pm.

She's not looking to discover new genres, she knows exactly what she wants at each point in the day. The problem is ***no app organises content around her schedule.***

Goals

Time aware recommendations without any manual setup.

Quick access to familiar content categories for each part of her day.

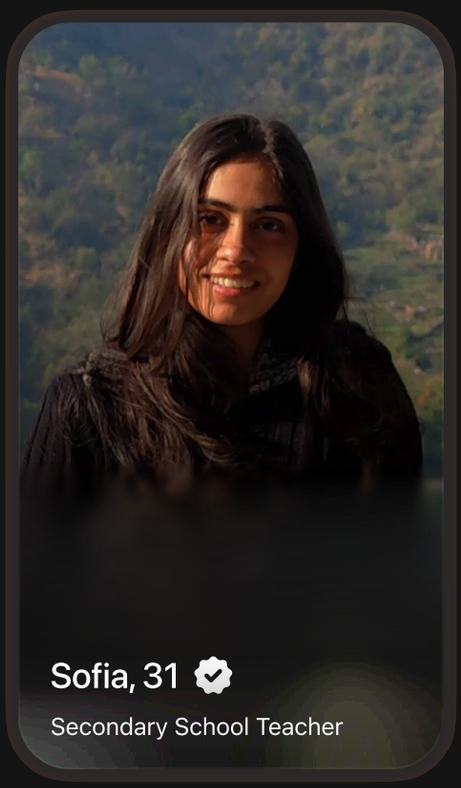
She doesn't want to waste 5 minutes deciding what to play.

Frustrations:

Has to manually seek out different content types throughout the day.

Recommendation engines ignore the that it's 8pm and she's exhausted.

Feels like she's managing the app rather than the app serving her.



Competitor Analysis

Insight:
No existing platform addresses mood or situational context.
This was the clearest white space and *VibePod's primary differentiator*.

Feature	Spotify	Music	Pocket Casts	Vibepod
Mood-based recommendations	✗	✗	✗	✓
Live podcast sessions	✗	✗	✗	✓
Topic onboarding	Partial	✗	✗	✓
Time-of-day context	✗	✗	✗	✓
Episode transcripts	✓	✗	✗	✓
Personalised home feed	✓	Partial	✗	✓

Design Process

The process followed a double diamond structure.
Discover, define, develop, deliver.

1. Discover

User interviews and diary studies to map emotional states across a typical day

2. Discover

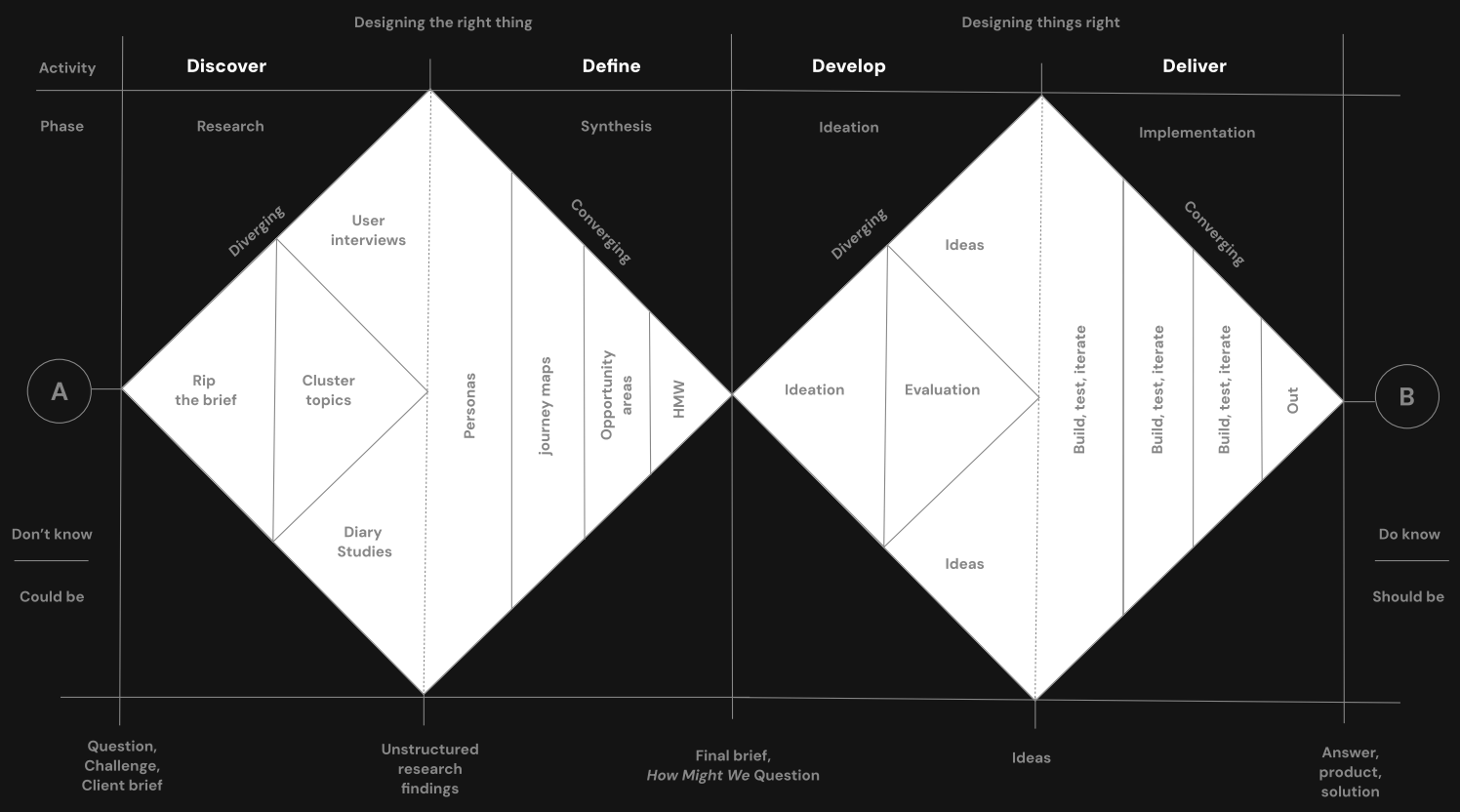
Synthesised research into personas, journey maps, and a clear problem statement

3. Develop

4. Deliver

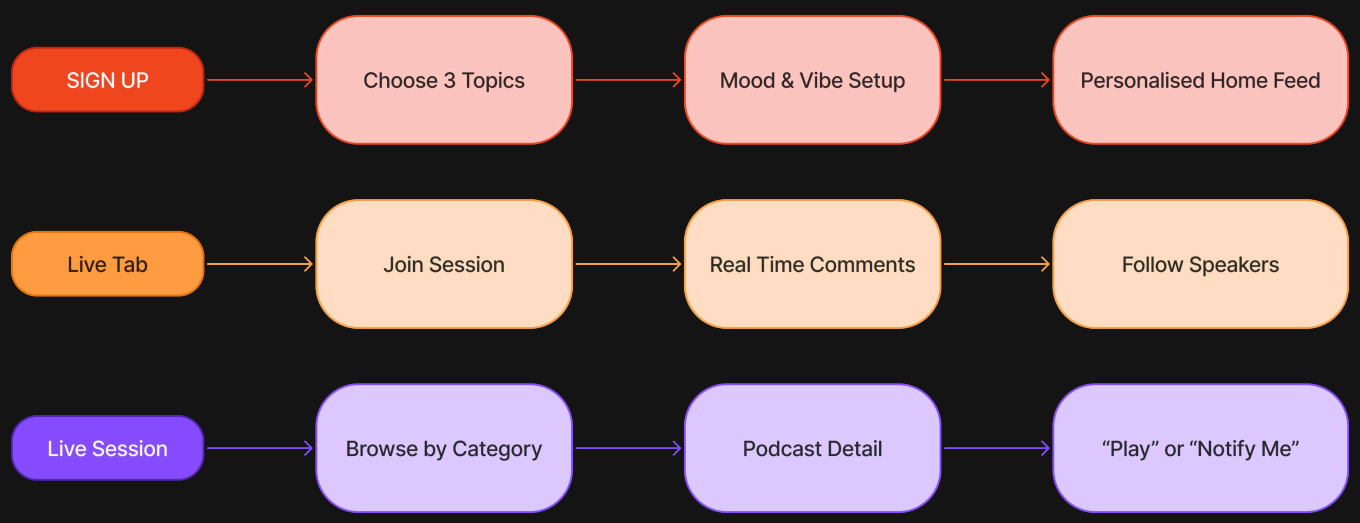
Sketched flows, built low and mid-fidelity wireframes, iterated based on feedback.

High-fidelity UI, design system, and prototype for usability testing



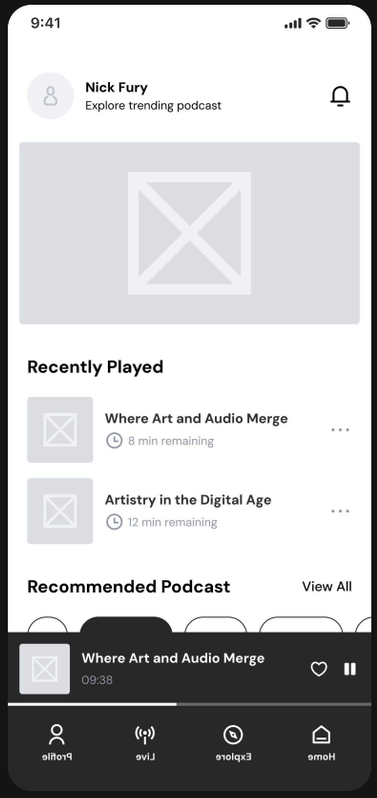
User Flow

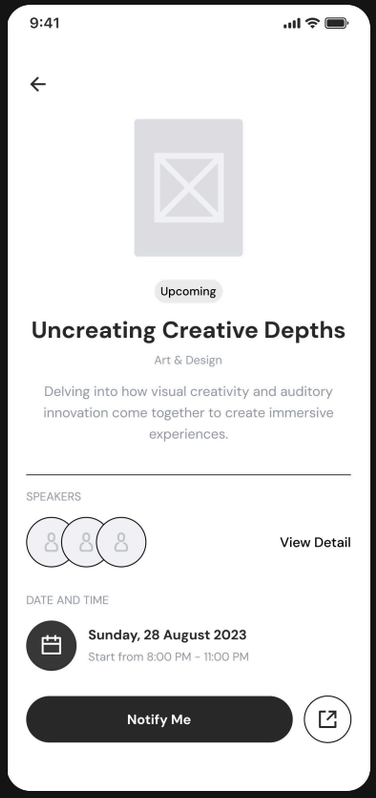
Mapping the *3 core journeys* through the app

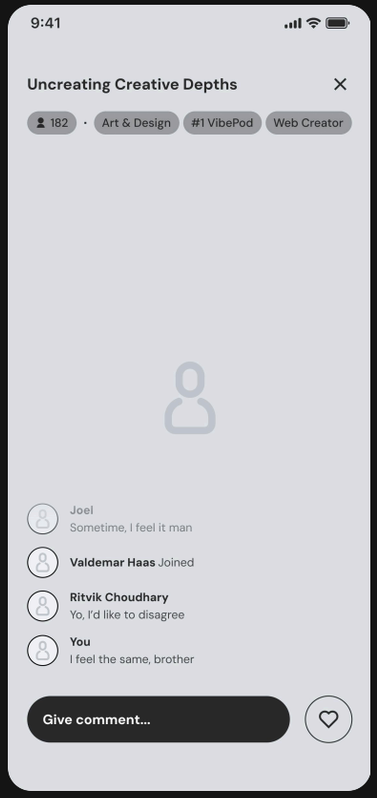


Wireframes

From rough sketches to refined structure







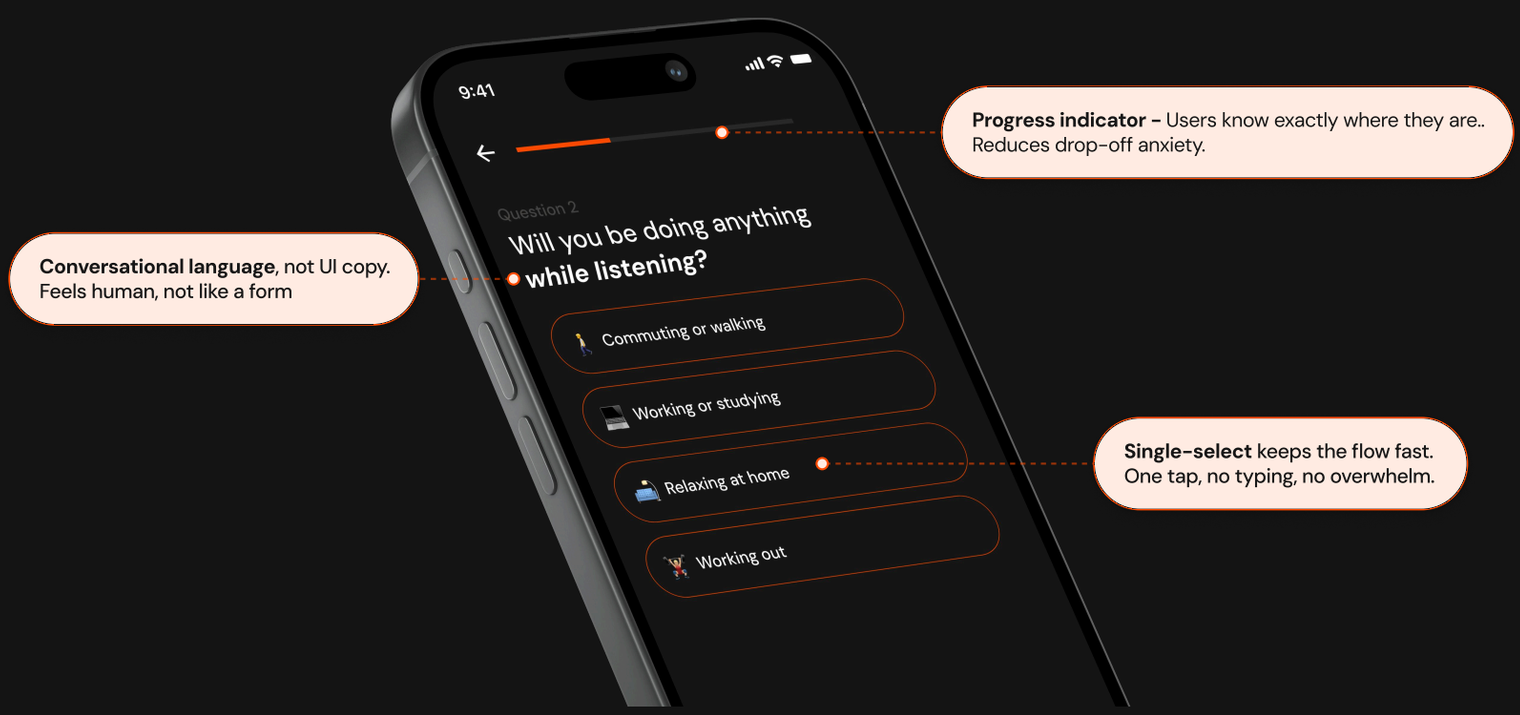
Key Design Decisions

The reasoning behind every intentional choice

Decision 1: Question-Driven Vibe Setup

Rationale

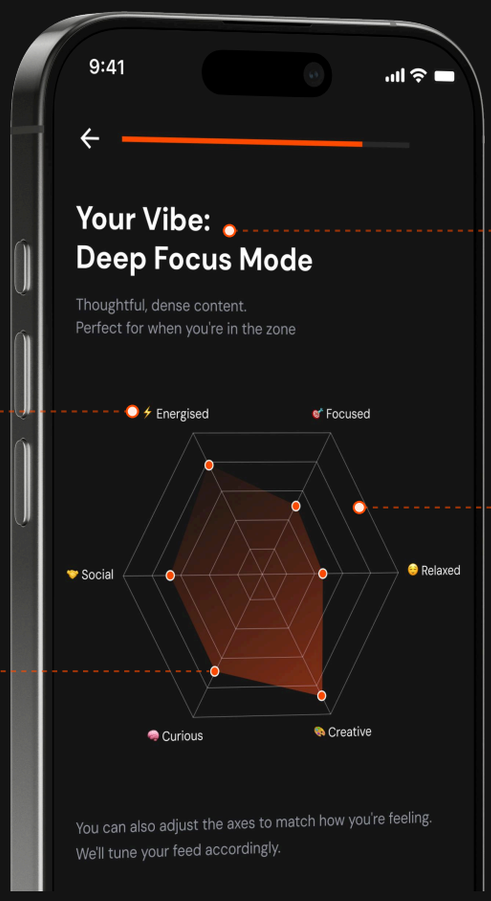
Instead of asking users to configure settings, the app has a *conversation with them*. 4 simple questions replace what could have been a complex preference panel.



Decision 2: Vibe Reveal + Spider Graph

Rationale

The spider graph isn't user-configured, it's revealed as a result. This reframes the experience from *"set your preferences" to "see yourself reflected."* A fundamentally more emotional and trustworthy moment.



Naming the mood creates recognition. Users feel understood, not categorised

Labels describe listening states, not personality. Directly maps to recommendable content.

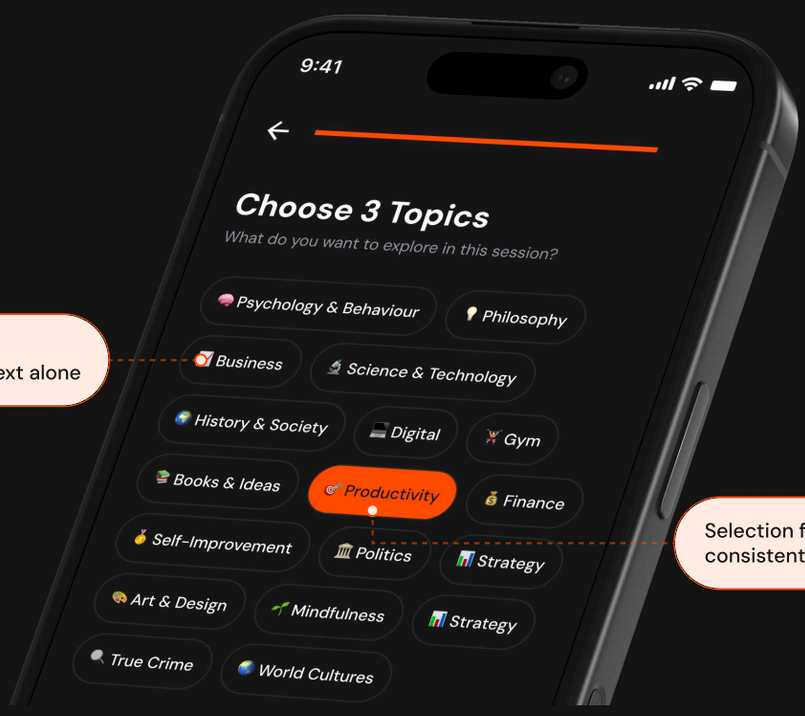
6-axis visualisation (Spider Graph) communicates mood complexity honestly. One label isn't enough.

Power users can **fine-tune axes.** Caters to both casual and deliberate listeners.

Decision 3: Vibe-Filtered Topic Selection

Rationale

Topics aren't shown as a flat list, they're *pre-filtered based on the detected vibe*. A "Wind Down" vibe hides True Crime. A "Deep Focus" vibe surfaces Philosophy and Science. The two layers — mood and topic — work together, not independently.



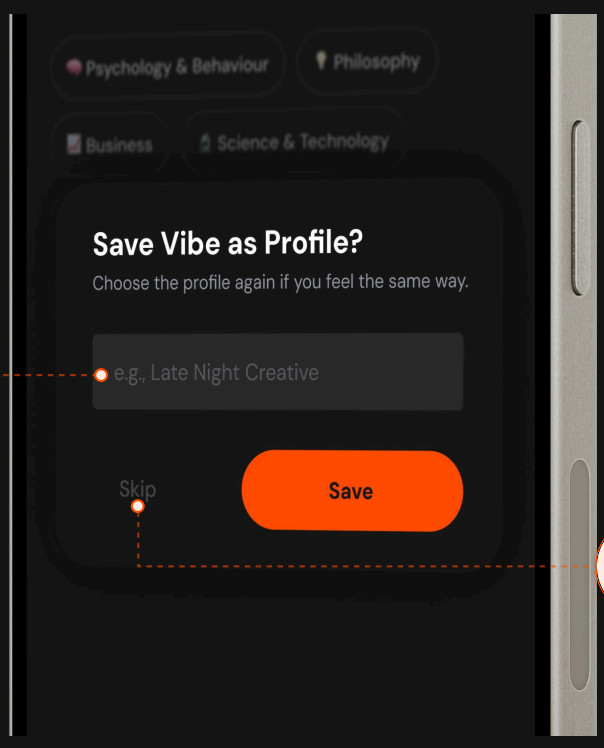
Emojis add **scannability**. Users process options faster than text alone

Selection feedback is **immediate** and consistent with the design system.

Decision 4: Save Vibe as Profile

Rationale

A one-time mood input becomes a ***reusable profile.*** Users who commute every morning or deep-work every afternoon shouldn't have to answer 4 questions every time. Saved profiles make the system smarter with use.



User-defined naming **creates ownership.** 'My Deep Work Mode' feels personal.

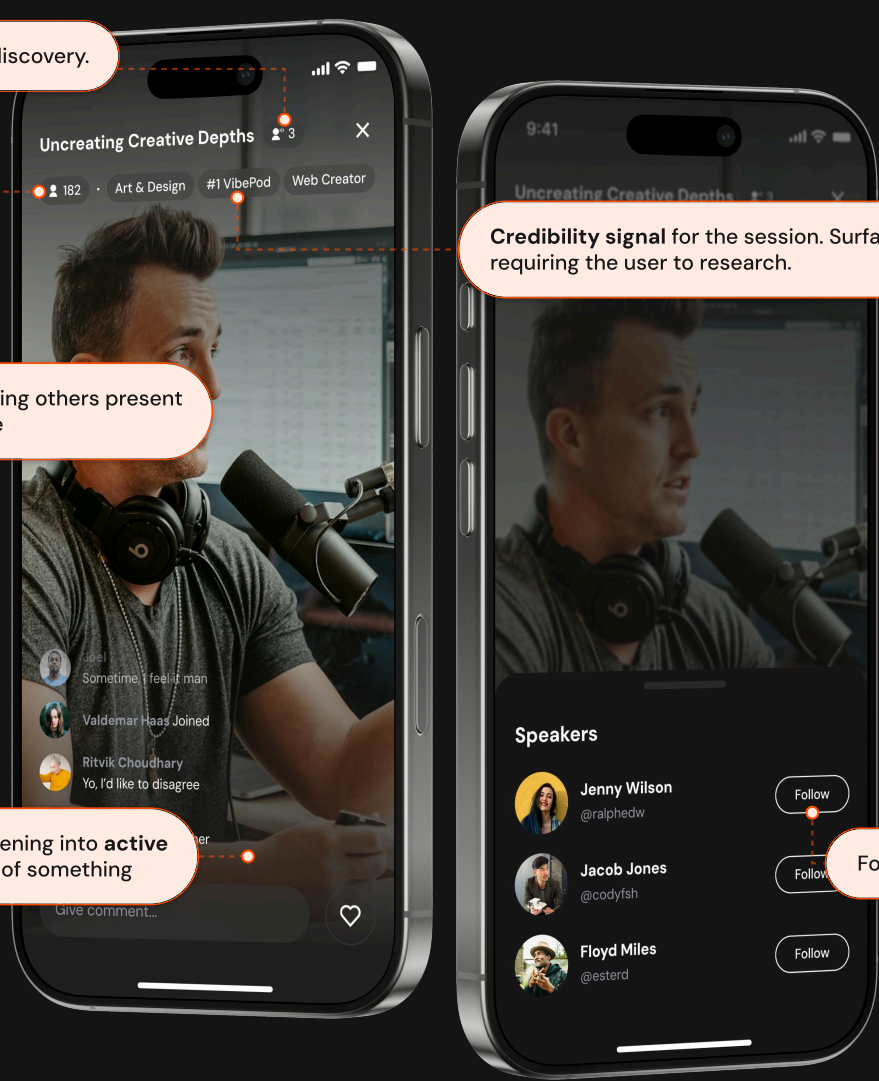
Saving is **always optional.** Respects users who prefer a fresh vibe check each session.

Decision 5: Live Session as a Social Layer

Rationale

Every other podcast app is a solitary experience. VibePod's Live tab adds a real-time communal layer. Listeners become participants. The comment stream, viewer count serve this shift from ***consumption to community.***

Tappable speakers enable context discovery.



Credibility signal for the session. Surfaces quality without requiring the user to research.

Social proof **creates urgency**. Seeing others present makes the session feel unmissable

Comments transform passive listening into **active participation**. Listeners feel part of something

Follow **without** leaving the experience.

Final Screens

Where research, logic, and design come together

Outcome

What the data said after the design was done