

# YouTube Spotlight

Stop processing. Start flowing

YouTube has 2 billion users. And every single one  
has done this:

"I've been scrolling for 10 minutes trying to find  
something to watch."

This is a concept feature that removes the effort  
from finding a good video

## **The Problem**

### **My Audit**

I used my neuro-inclusive audit framework to analyze YouTube's home feed.

### **How do I feel looking at this screen?**

Bad. Annoyed. Lazy. Frustrated.

### **What's wrong?**

Finding a good video takes too long. I don't want to read titles. I don't want to analyze thumbnails. I just want to find something good... fast....

### **Why is it slow?**

Because YouTube makes you think.

You see a thumbnail. You read a title. You think: 'Does this relate to me?' You reflect on your memories. You guess if it's worth watching. That's cognitive effort, for every single video.

# The Insight

**I asked myself:**

“What if I didn't have to think at all?”

Thumbnails and titles make you guess what a video is about.

But the actual content? That tells you instantly.

**Thumbnails make you guess. Sound lets you know.**

Within 3 seconds of hearing a video, you feel if it's for you. No reading. No analyzing. No guessing. Your gut decides, instantly.

The video sells itself with its actual content, not a thumbnail that makes your brain work.

## **The Solution: Spotlight**

Spotlight is an optional discovery mode that lets you find videos by feeling, not thinking

### **How it works:**

#### **1. Four quadrants**

Instead of infinite scroll, you see 4 videos at a time.  
Less noise. Easier to process.

#### **2. Drag to listen**

Drag your finger across the quadrants to hear previews.  
Keep holding for extended preview, you control how much you hear. No tapping. No commitment. Just flow.

#### **3. Tap to select**

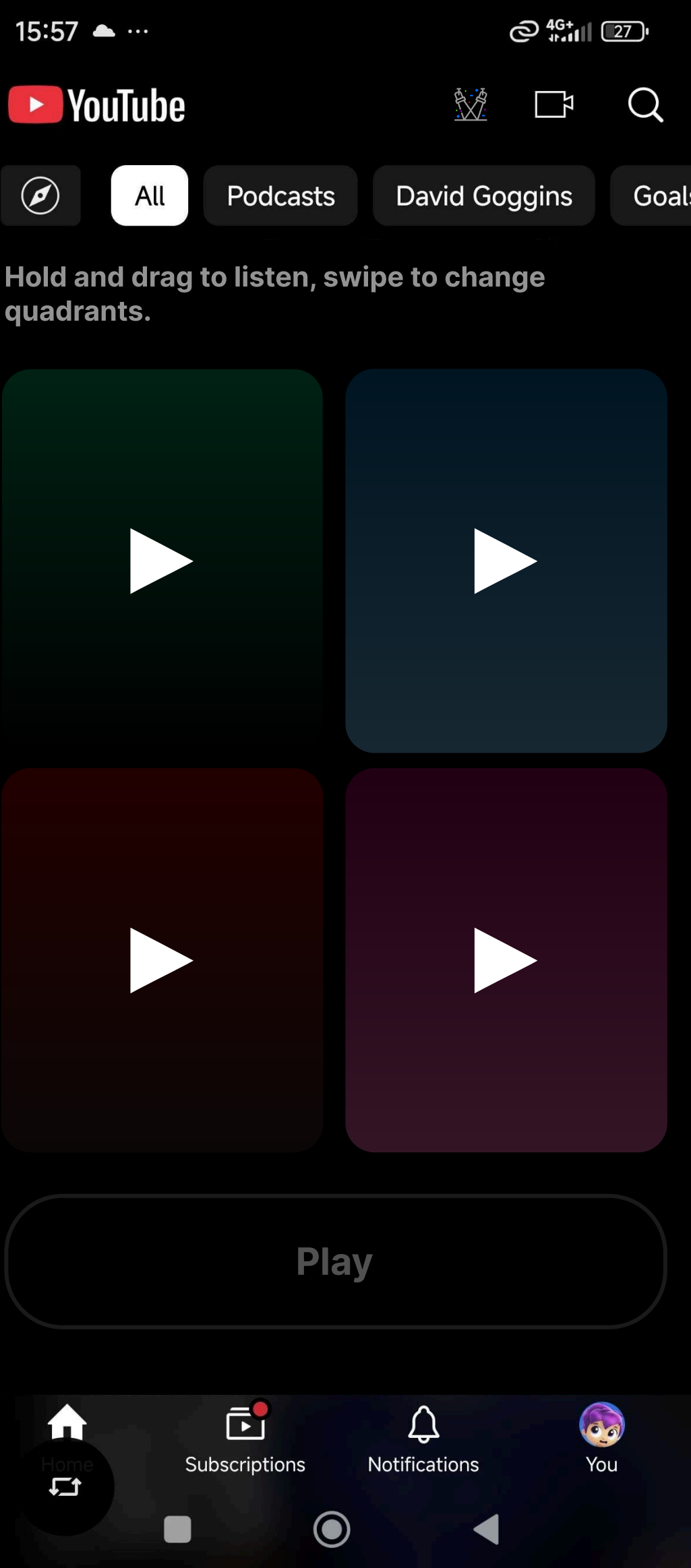
Found one that feels right? Tap it, then hit Play.

#### **4. Swipe to refresh**

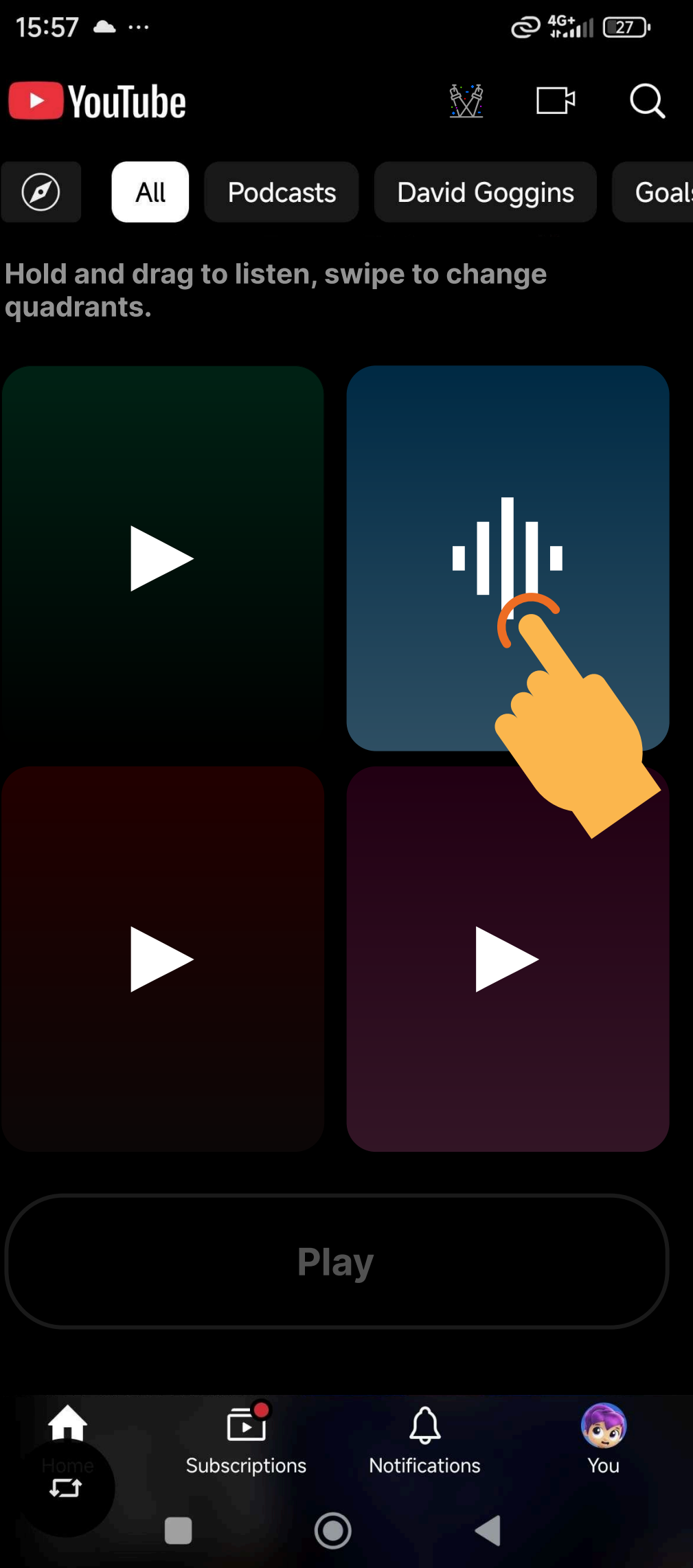
None of them hit? Swipe to get 4 new options. No endless scrolling. Just fresh choices.

The Interaction Flow

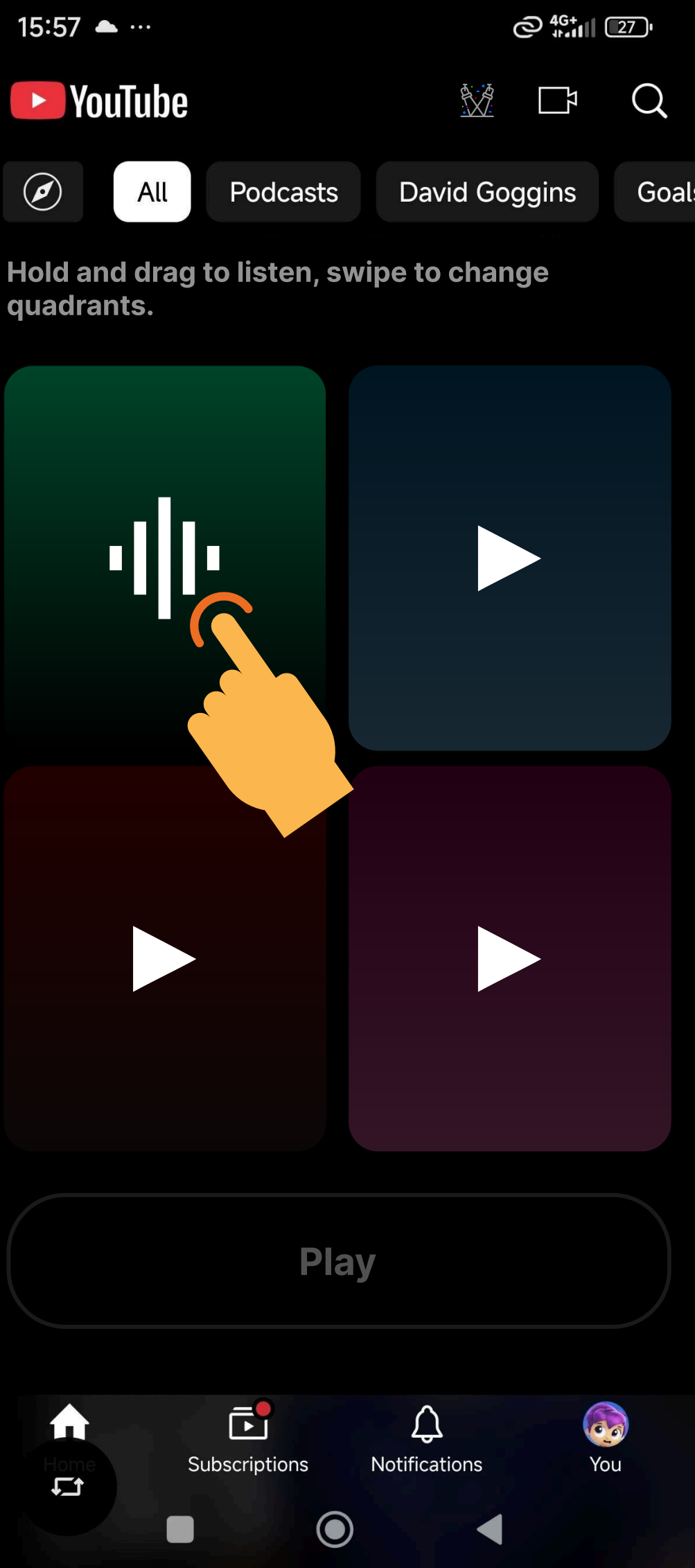
Idle



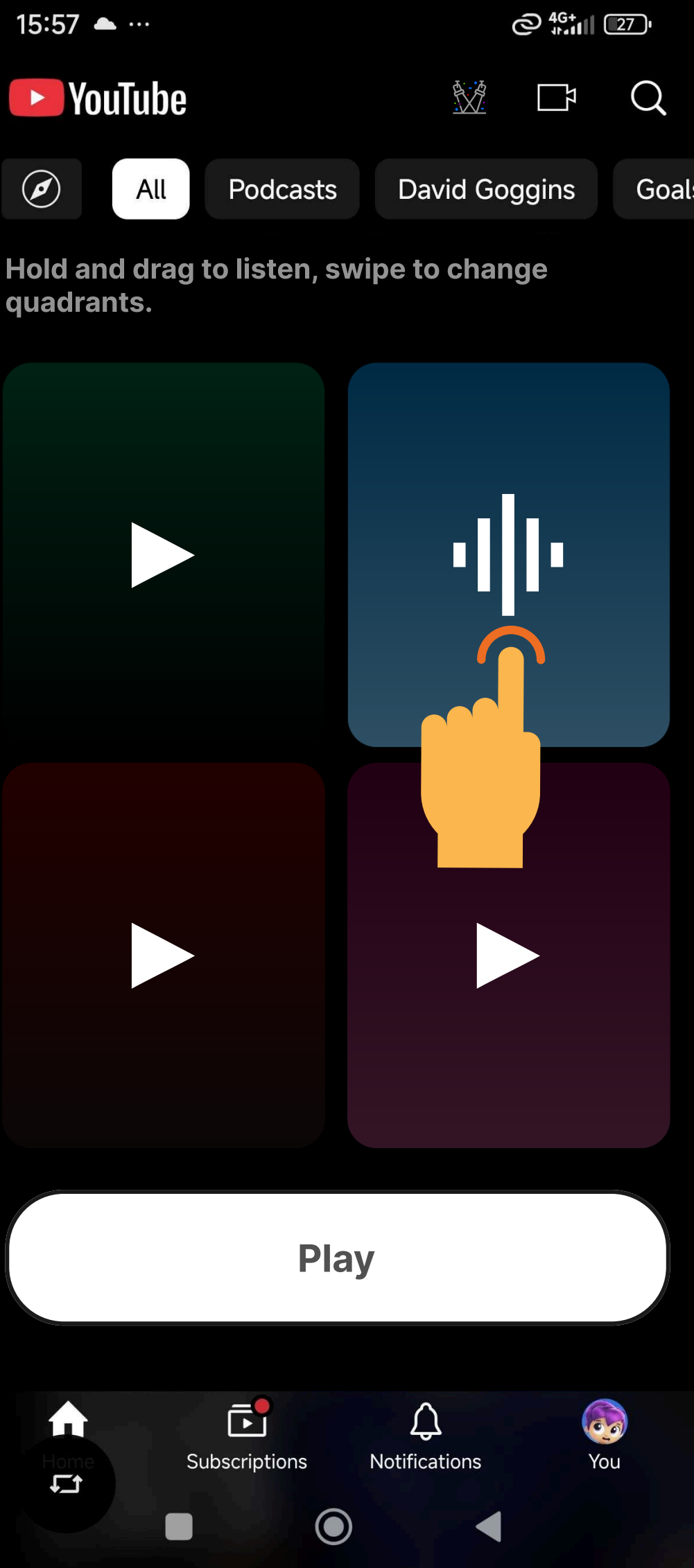
Holding & Listening



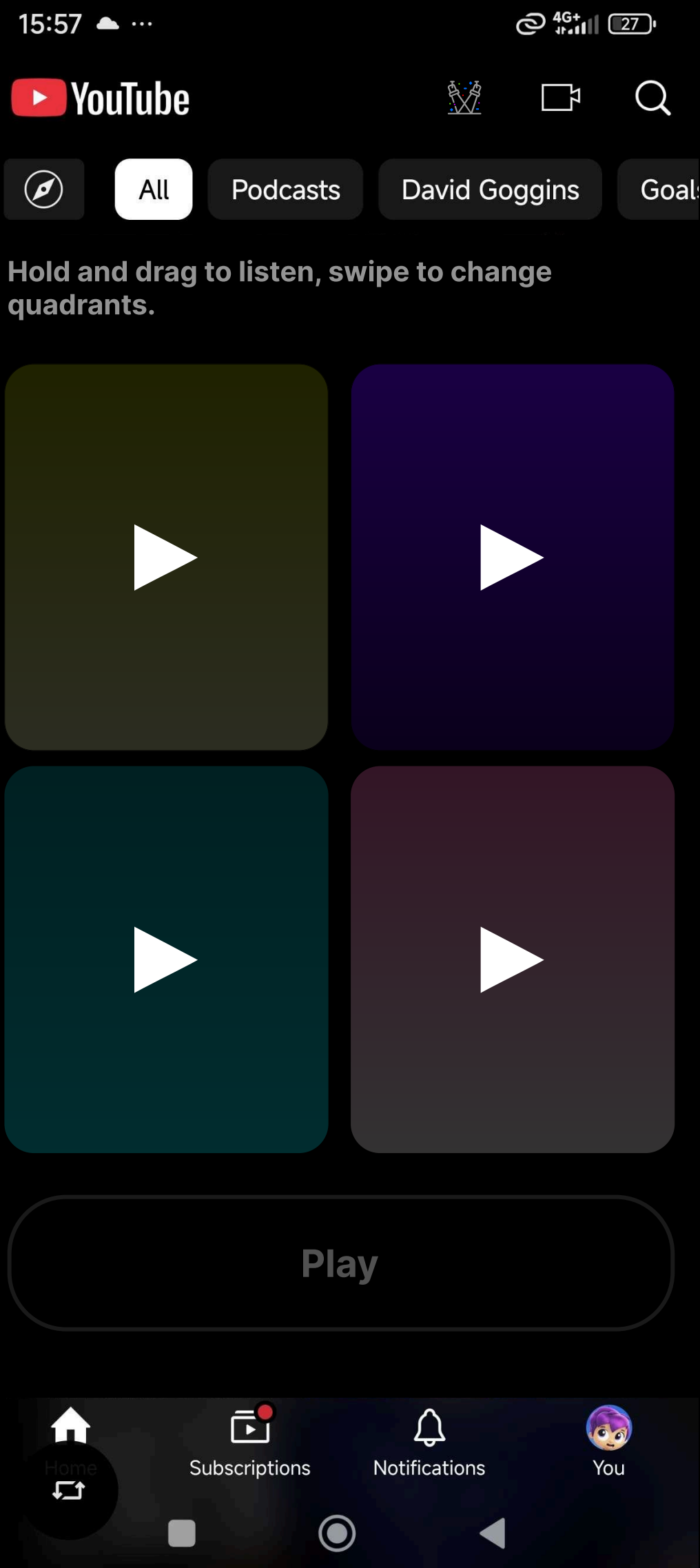
Dragging to change video



Tap



Swiping to change quadrant



# The Difference

## Current YouTube (Thinking):

- See thumbnail
- Read title
- Think: 'Is this for me?'
- Recall memories
- Guess if it's worth watching
- Repeat for every video

## Spotlight (Feeling):

- Drag to hear
- Feel if it's right
- Tap to watch

No reading. No analyzing. No effort.  
Just flow through the options until  
something hits.

## **Why this works**

### **1. Removes cognitive effort**

You don't process information, you just feel it. Your gut knows in 3 seconds what your brain takes minutes to figure out.

### **2. Shows actual value**

Thumbnails are marketing. Sound is the real content. You experience the video before you commit to it.

### **3. Creates flow state**

Dragging through quadrants feels effortless. You're not searching, you're flowing until something resonates.

### **4. Neuro-inclusive design**

For users with ADHD or anxiety, reading and analyzing is exhausting. Spotlight is an optional mode that removes that burden.

## Business Impact

### For YouTube:

- **Faster time to watch**, Users find content quicker, start watching sooner
- **Reduced bounce rate**, Fewer users giving up because they 'can't find anything'
- **Better content matching**, Users hear real content, pick videos they actually enjoy
- **Accessibility win**, Optional feature for users who struggle with visual browsing

### For Users:

- Less time scrolling, more time watching
- Confidence in choices (you heard it before committing)
- Reduced overwhelm and decision anxiety



## Summary

YouTube makes you think to find a video.

Spotlight lets you feel instead.

**Thumbnails make you guess. Sound lets you know.**

Drag to hear. Tap to select. Swipe for more.

Stop processing. Start flowing.

An optional discovery mode for anyone tired of endless scrolling.

**David Balinga**

Product Designer | Neuro-Inclusive UX

[davidbalinga.com](http://davidbalinga.com)